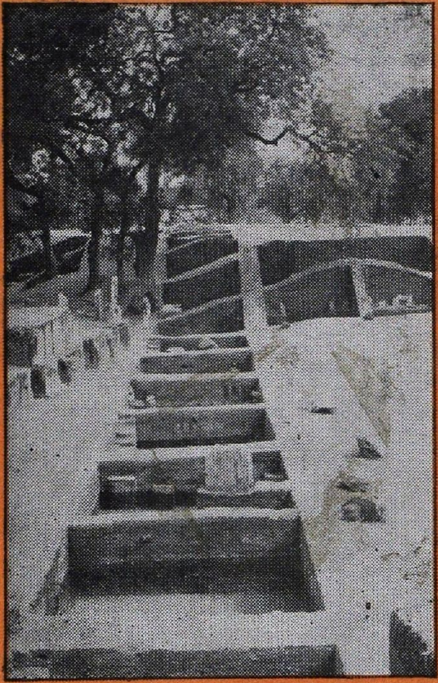
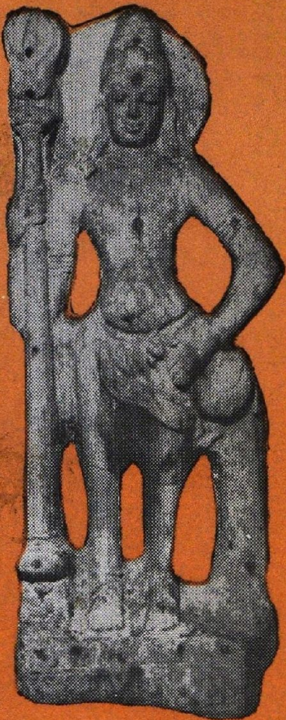
MADRAS UNIVERSITY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERIES No. 7

RELIGION IN ART AND HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGY OF SOUTH INDIA: CONTACTS AND CORRELATIONS





I. K. SARMA

UNIVERSITY OF MADRAS

The Madras University Archaeological Series No. 7

General Editor
Dr. K. V. RAMAN

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RELIGION IN ART, AND HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGY OF SOUTH INDIA: CONTACTS AND CORRELATIONS

Śaṅkara-Pārvatī Endowment Lectures
(1982-83)

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New Delhi.

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EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

We have pleasure in publishing the two lectures delivered by Dr. I. Karthikeya Sarma under the auspices of the Sankara Parvati Endowment for the year 1982-83. Dr. I. K. Sarma is now the Director, Archaeological Survery of India, New Delhi. He was formerly the Superintending Archaeologist, Temple Survey Project (South) at Madras. He is an archaeologist of wide experience having worked in several major excavation projects like Nagarjunakonda, Kalibangan, Paiyampalli, Pauni and Surkotada. He directed excavations at Gudimallam, Amaravati, Guntupalli and Peddavegi and brought to light significant discoveries and published valuable reports on these excavations. He has completed a major project work *Art and Architecture of the Western Gangas of Karnataka.* He has written several books like *The Coinage of the Satāvahana Empire* (1980); *The Development of Early Saiva Art and Architecture* (1982), *Studies in Early Buddhist Monuments and Brahmi Inscription of Andhradesa* (1987). He visited China and wrote the book *The Buddhist Monuments of China and South East Asia* (1982).

Thus, he is a scholar of wide interests and has specialised in the early history of art, architecture and religion of South India. His intimate knowledge of epigraphy, numismatics and field archaeology has enabled him to integrate the evidence and present a broad historical and cultural framework. Here in these lectures, he presents the recent discoveries in South India with special reference to Tamilnadu and Andhra and draws our attention to many important aspects relating to the early history, impact of Buddhism, Mauryan influences, monumental vestiges for Saivism and the like. He has rightly stressed the need for

remodelling our field strategies and probing many more important historical sites and link the evidences with those of the neighbouring states to obtain a wider perspective. It is a welcome contribution to the early historical archaeology of South India.

Place : Madras
Date : 16th December 1987

K. V. RAMAN,
Professor and Head of the Department of Ancient History and Archaeology, University of Madras.

PREFACE

A study of the Early Historical Period of South India through the archaeological sources provides several interesting links between Tamilnadu-Andhra Pradesh on the one hand and Karnataka-Kerala on the other. I am grateful to the University of Madras for honouring me by their invitation to deliver two lectures under the Śaṅkara-Pārvatī endowment scheme (1982-83). I have delivered the talks on 2nd and 3rd December, 1985. I thank my esteemed friend Prof. K. V. Raman for suggesting me a topic of of this nature which I had somewhat reluctantly agreed upon in beginning. But sooner I realised how vital and important the subject is! I am sure the learned scholars would share my experience and might find it a worthwhile exercise, if not, an exhaustive treatment on the subject.

In the first lecture (Section-I) a critical analysis of the data obtained from the excavated sites is attempted. The second lecture (Sections II to V) dwells on the various facets of Brāhmaṇical religion in Art and Archaeology of South India. The rituals of a religion, like the kernel of a grain, retain life and germinate. It is in these very geographical zones of the peninsula that the Indian civilization was preserved in its prestine form. There is absolute need to document thoroughly, with specific problems in mind, the art objects and icons from the excavated contexts of South India. There is abundant religious literature and inscriptional wealth to aid and substantiate more researches in this direction.

I am deeply beholden to the authorities of the University of Madras, and Dr. K. V. Raman, Professor and Head, Department of Ancient History and Archaeology, in particular, for publishing these lectures in the form of a separate monograph. I also thank Messers Avvai Achukkoodam, Madras-13 for printing the work neatly.

The accompanying illustrations were obtained from the photo-archives of the Archaeological Survey of India, mainly from Temple Survey Project, Southern Region, Madras and Hyderabad Circle. I am grateful to my departmental colleagues Sarvaśri M. Theagarajan and M. U. Qureshi, Senior Photographers and Shri N. K. S. Sharma, Stenographer of the Excavations Branch(I), Nagpur for their spontaneous help. Dr. K. Krishna Murthy, Superintending Archaeologist, Temple Survey Project, Southern Region, Madras, has very kindly permitted me to study in his offiee. I am specially obliged to him, as also Sarvasri Qureshi and Barapatre for the attractive cover design.

New Delhi
16—12—1987

I. K. SARMA

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CHAPTER I

HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGY OF SOUTH INDIA - RECENT EVIDENCES

Aśōka Maurya in his Rock Edict-II mentions among the independent border kingdoms of rulers, the Chōḷas, Pāṇḍyas in plural, *Satiyaputa* (probably Atiyaman of the Koṅgu region), and *Keralaputa* in singular with whom the Mauryan king maintained good rapport. This mode of mentioning[1] the *Satiyaputa* and *Keralaputa* is conspicuously absent in Rock Edict-III, which suggests these two contiguous territories came under Aśōkan spell between the issue of Roct Edict-II and III. This was perhaps a sequal to the conflicts between Nandas and Mauryas in their expansion towards South, *i.e.*, Lower Deccan and *Drāviḍadēśa* during the preceding century.[2] A recently discovered single-line inscription at the cave shelter at Jambai, Thirukkoilur taluk, South Arcot district, raises the hope of proper identification of *Satiyaputas* but its authenticity was questioned by some renowned epigraphists.[3]

Aśōka sent his emissaries to propagate *Dharmma* in these regions, including *Taṁbapaṁṇi.* An early spread of the *Theravāda* doctrine[4] into the Eastern Andhra region (Dhānyakaṭaka centre) under Moggaliputta Ṭhissa may not be ruled out. According to *Mahāvaṁśa*, Moggaliputta sent five *Theras* to *Tambapaṁṇi*; one *Mahādeva Thera* to *Mahishamaṇḍala*; one *Rakhita* to Vanavasi; one *Rakhita* to Aparanta and *Mahā-Rakhita* to another country. This took place after the Pataliputra Council (third Buddhist meet). *Tamba-Paṁṇi*[5] is regarded by some as the area

where river Tamraparni flows and *Mahishamaṇḍala* is not in Mysore but in Krishna-Guntur via Amaravati area.[6] The team lead by *Thera* Mahendra must have been taken the East coast route.

Again *Mahāvaṁśa* (Chapter-36, p. 144) refers to Muchilindanagara, and P.S. Sastry takes[7] it to be the present Machulipaṭṭaṇam near the coast. This important ancient port town was also colled 'Maisolos' by Ptolemy.[8] It may not be without significance that the episode of Nāga Muchilinda protecting the Buddha from a great storm soon after the enlightenment was a favourite theme in the Krishna valley Buddhist[9] art. The monks from Dhaṁñakaḍa moved through this 'Maisolo' port to farther south-east coast and Ceylon.

My recent excavations, at the *Mahāchaitya* site of Amaravathi (PL. 1), Guntur district, Andhra pradesh, have conclusively proved that the *stūpa* and the sculptural art[10] in stone at Dhānyakaṭaka, began during early Mauryan times and took firmer roots with the ennobling royal touch under Aśōkan *dharma*. The earliest Buddhist base of Dhānyakaṭaka (the *Mahā-Saṅghikas* whose stronghold was Vaiśāli also held greater sway over Andhra with Dhānyakaṭaka as their base) played no mean role in attracting the attention of Aśoka, who chose the place as a centre for his proselytizing activity in south-east India and Śrīlanka. The very pillar over which Aśoka inscribed his edict might perhaps be taken as an hypaethral column existing earlier. If one agrees with the view of John Irwin[11] such free standing colums at the holy Buddhist places or *tīrthas* constituted a structural pattern and served as the main object of worship. In fact, the form of writing over this fragmentary pillar face clearly shows that the letters were engraved after the highly polished massive pillar was raised. This might be the process observed while causing the pillar edicts. The first act was erection of the massive finished shaft at the selected spot. The carving of the edict was the second important function. There is no need to think that

Aśoka attempted[12] to carve his *Dharma* formulae over existing pillars of an earlier period.

The earliest levels below the *Mahā-chaitya* distinguished as Period-IB, represented an occupational layer (preceding the granite rail) with huts-on-posts clearly indicates a settlement of monks[13] initially from the eastern epicentres (Vaiśālī, Śrāvasti, Rājagṛiha and Kusinagara) of Buddhism, using the characteristic NBP ware bowls and dishes, besides the early historical Black-and-red ware characteristic of the pre-Mauryan strata at the *Mahā-janapāda* sites of the north. The NBP ware is not a local product and its descent to Amaravati-Dharanikota, quite reasonably took at least a century, to reach from its Bihar nucleus. The C-14 dates of the historical levels of Dharaṇikoṭa-Amaravati reveal[14] 475 ± 100 B.C. (TF.246) for the earliest deposits; 390 ± 100 B.C. (TF-247) for the Middle phase and 205 ± 100 B.C. (TF-248) for the earliest fortifications of Dharanikota. The transmitters were tradesmen and its diffusion is linked with the consolidation of the first urbanisation[15] in the North (*mahā-janapādas*) and rise of new religious faiths like Buddhism and Jainism. Āndhradēśa, particularly its long south-east coast, played a great role in nurturing and transmitting these early religious movements to farther south and beyond.

Āndhradēśa was within (*anta* or *Iha-rājavishaya*) the Mauryan empire. The beginnings of the political and cultural history of Andhra[16] can be traced to a still earlier period from the large number of silver P.M.C. hoards of 'pre-Āśokan', some say "Pre-Mauryan", sequence echoing a "Nanda-Maurya" conflict. The Tamil literature also confirms this. Eṛṛagudi or Jonnagiri and Rājulamandagiri, both in district Kurnool, where the Minor Rock Edicts were found, appears to be a prominent centre as the very place name '*Rājula-manda-giri*' implied a hill where congregation of kings took place. It is, therefore, not surprising that as many as four Minor Rock Edicts found recently[17] in a concentrated area of North Karṇāṭaka (Udegolam,

Nittur) closer to the above Kurnool area, apart from the known ones at Brahmagiri (*Iśilā*) and Maski, have given scope to rise several interesting theories. Brahmagiri and Siddhapur Rock Inscriptions, also Sahasaram (U.P.), contain a reference to the presence of Aśoka himself[18] at Suvarṇagiri where from he advises through his *mahāmātras* at Iśilā to follow up the proclamation made during his tour on 257th day. The *Mahā-mātras* posted at Iśilā and Suvarnagiri perhaps caused these epigraphs. K.V. Ramesh thinks of a headquarters of a Southern Division of Mauryan Empire and "an important halting point on a much frequented trade route."[19] While M.J. Sharma, laying stress on the occurrence of the proper names Rāja Aśoka in these Karṇāṭaka edicts[20] (also exceptionally in Gujarra, M.P.) proposed that the Minor Rock Edicts were issued by Mahīndra from Ceylon on behalf of his father. The specific citation of the king's name as *Dēvānāmpiya* and *Rāja Aśoka* was necessary to avoid confusion as the *Ṭhissa*, the king of Śrīlanka contemporary of Aśoka, also bore the proper name *Dēvānāṁpriya.* It is again of interest to note that the Panguraria edict (near Hoshangabad, M.P.) addressed to the local governor *Sāmva-Kumāra*, obviously a son of Aśoka, the king is mentioned by another name *Piyadasirāja*[21] and not as *Dēvānāṁpiya* or Aśoka.

The expression "men in *Jaṁbū-dvipa*" (Brahmagiri edict) does not occur in the group of Rock Edicts or Pillar Edicts but only in the group of Minor Rock Edicts. In the Śrīlankan Chroncile, *Mahāvaṁśa* the people of the entire Indian sub-continent were addressed as belonging to *Jaṁbu-dvīpa.* Why this reference? It appears in Buddhist tradition Aśoka was known as *dvīpachakravartin* and the expression *Jaṁbudvīpa* included a larger territory of which Bharatavarsha is a part. In daily *Sankalpa* one utters *Jaṁbudvīpe Bharata Varshe-Bharatakhaṇḍe,* etc. which clearly shows that the term included other Countries also.

Suvarṇagirī mentioned in Brahmagiri Edict according to some scholars is stated to be in Śrīlanka, south of Sigi-

riya and Polonnaruva. Dambulla caves are called *Suvaṇṇagiri-guhā* in later inscriptions. It appears, therefore, that official text of the Minor Rock Edicts was prepared centrally in Ceylon. They were issued by Mahindra, the monk son of Aśoka from Ceylon and the mention of the proper name as Aśoka or Priyadarśi was necessary to distinguish him from the contemporary Ceylonese king. It may be noted that this is only in respect of the Minor Rock Edicts. How is it that we do not get even a stray indication of any Mauryan or say Aśokan inscription or relic in the vast territories of Tamilnadu-Kerala? This absence was perhaps due to the presence of Jainism which appears to have considerably spread from a fairly early period in southern parts of Tamilnadu as noted from sites like Sittannavasal[22] (Pudukkottai) and Tirupparankunram[23] (Madurai). The highly polished rock-beds of Sittannavasal have to be looked upon as technically Mauryan imitations in the south. Early Tamil-Brāhmī inscriptions from Madurai, Tirunelveli and Ramanathapuram districts, specially those from Madurai referring to Pāṇḍya king Neḍuncheḷiyaṉ and Chera king Ilaṅkadungo, (who were mentioned in Sangam literature) also take them to *circa* third century to first century B.C. Early Jainism has not created any visible structural establishments or models of shrines or *Devakulams* till fifth-sixth century A.D. anywhere in South India. Tamilnadu is no exception. It is interesting to note that one of the early settlements in the Saṅgam period "Tiruppadiri-p-puliyur[24] located between Cuddalore and Chidambaram on the coast was called "Pāṭalīputra". *Mūlāchāra* and Pravachanasāra of the Jains[25] which were composed during the early centuries of Christian era forbade any permanent habitation for Jainas at a given place. *Mūlāchāra* further ordains that monks should stay in a deserted house, under a tree or on burial grounds, or in natural caves etc. In Koṅgu country Pugaḷūr,[26] near Karūr in District Tiruchirapalli, was an important Jaina *Pāḷi* accommodating a large Jaina community in four rock-shelters on the hill. From the Cera inscriptions dated to

second century A.D. we learn that the rock *(kal)* was cut *(arupitha)* for Ceṅkāyapan, a Jaina ascetic, by the grandson Kō Āthaṉ Cēral Irumpoṟai. Some of the inscriptions near the beds and pillow lofts give names of the users and one such bed *(adiṭṭānam)* was meant for Ceṅkāyapan. Though Sravanabelgola was a hallowed centre of Digambara Jainism with a tradition going back to the times of Bhadrabāhu (third century B.C), the last *Śrutakevalin* and Chandragupta Maurya, there is no cognizable evidence to date the vestiges at this place prior to *circa* fifth-century A.D. This is so with regard to the whole of Karṇāṭaka. But the later wave of Digambara Jainism which virtually engulfed Tamilnadu, Andhra and subsequently Kerala is based at the Sravanabelgola centre. The *mūlasaṅgha* of this place first finds mention in a copper plate record of Ganga king Siṁhavarma (463-461), who established an *arhad* temple at Perbolal (Kolar). The inscription from Tirunātharkuṉṟu village, Singavaram, South Arcot which reveals the *Samāthi maraṇa* of an *āchārya* Chandranandi[27] by name after fasting for 57-days, is the first clear evidence regarding the observance of *sallēkhana*. This is actually the second wave of Jainism under the aegis of the Karṇāṭa-Gangas from the Sravanabelgola centre which reached the Pallava kingdom (*Koṅgu* tract) under Viśākhāchārya starting from the times of Pallava Siṁhavishṇu. Kāñchī became an important centre of Jainism. Pallava king Mahendra was himself a Jaina originally. This wave mostly influenced Toṇḍaimaṇḍalam and *Koṅgu* regions, apart from the entire Deccan and coastal Āndhra by the eighth century A.D. May it, however, be noted that the earliest wave of Digambara Jainism, as outlined above, spread along the East coast to the interiors of Tamilnadu, through Orissa-and the coastal Andhra region. This movement has greatly checked the expansion of Mauryan Buddhism to the interiors of Tamilnadu and Kerala except Toṇḍaimaṇḍalam. We shall now dilate upon certain important excavations undertaken by the Archaeological Survey of India, State Departments of Archaeology of Tamilnadu, Andhra Pradesh and Karna-

taka and the Universities of Madras, Mysore, Dharwar and, more recently the Tamil University, Tanjore etc. A good account is found in the Annual Reports of the State Departments, *Indian Archaeology — A Review*, published by the Archaeological Survey of India, besides, some works by T.V. Mahalingam,[28] K.V. Raman,[29] K.S. Ramachandran[30] and several others whose reports are cited at the appropriate places.

Korkai, district Tirunelveli (Tamilnadu), Amaravathi and Vaddamanu, district Guntur (A.P.)

Korkai, is an ancient port town of the Pāṇḍyas *en route* to Śrīlanka on the east coast. It has yielded in its earliest levels a Black-and-red ware, besides sherds of the N.B.P. ware. Another noteworthy find is a sturdy Red ware of thick fabric well burnt and with thin buff to red slip which was found in the earliest levels, almost recalling the well burnt post-Harappan types of Gujarat region. Quite interesting is a solitary C-14 date[31] (TF-987, 2775 $\pm$ 95) of 805 $\pm$ 95 B.C. obtained for a wood piece, locus O-I, KRK-I, layer-5, depth 3.17 m. In all, six fragments of N.B.P. were reported to have been found and S. Gurumurthy[32] who studied them observed that the fabric is of medium grey, not so fine as in North Indian sites. The core is 8 mm. thick and except a thin convex round-based bowl piece, the others are small sherds. I had an occasion to examine at the Tamil University, Tanjavur, pottery of Korkai, through the kind courtesy of Natana Kasinathan, Director-in-charge of the Department of Archaeology, Government of Tamilnadu on 11.6.84. Only two sherds among the collections of Period-I were undoubtedly of N.B.P. ware.[33] It might be noted that in the renewed excavations at the *mahāchaitya* site (1973-74) of Amaravati N.B.P. was abundantly found in Mauryan levels[34] and the thickness of the core ranged between 2 mm to 6 mm. The evidence from Period-IA (Early Mauryan) and IB (Aśokan) is the richest ever from South India. Period IA dated to the beginning of the Fourth century B.C. characterises the earliest occupation

of the site by the Buddhists in thatched huts-on-posts, and has yielded a total of 190 sherds. The *stūpa* appears to be a low mound of mud. An equal number of N.B.P sherds was found from Period IB (third century B.C) the distinction mainly being the addition of a partial railing to the Mauryan *stūpa* raised of massive, granite verticals bearing Mauryan polish and label inscriptions. A pillar edict part was also found. Both were embellishments of the Aśokan phase.

In Period-II, the post-Aśokan phase (second-first century B,C,) coeval with Bharhut and Sāñchī phase-I, the N.B.P. yield was very much reduced and only 39-fragments were found. The fabric is very fine, the colour of the core ranges from dull grey to ashy grey, buff, chocolate with burnt patches, the minimum thickness is 1 to 1.5 mm. and maximum 9 mm. in Period IB.

The types and surface-hues present a remarkable variety known only from the N.B.P. yielding sites of the *Gaṅgā-Yamunā* doab. The colours are steel-black, silvery, golden, and various other shades. Black pigment over silvery gloss, and purple bands over the rim of a bowl which has a pinky hue, indicate the presence of the painted variety as at Kosambi etc. The silver and golden variants are many and remarkable. A wide variety of copper revetting and luting by clamps is present in many examples of bowls, cups and dishes. It clearly shows that this deluxe ware was carefully used and deemed very precious. The Amaravati evidence of the N.B.P. ware is the richest both qualitatively and quantitatively in the entire Peninsular India (Maharashtra, Orissa, Bengal) and belongs to pre-Aśokan phase. To this evidence, we can now add another excavated *stūpa* site of great importance, over the hill in the village of Vaddamanu[35] just 10 km direct eastwards of the Amaravati *stūpa*. Here also the N.B.P. ware was found along with silver P.M.C. and fine Black-and-red ware sherds in its earliest levels. This could be equated to Period IB of Amaravati. From this hill-monastery site, we

also get an inscription on a rock cistern which refers to a king named *Rāja Ḍamaka*, recalling the name of the well-known Bhattiprolu king *Rāja Khubiraka.* Both the epigraphs are unquestionably of the Mauryan period (either early or late) and the two *Rajas* appear to be local kings in succession.[36] The NBP of Vaddamanu is, however, in small numbers. S. Sankaranarayanan[37] after a critical analysis of the Bhattiprolu records says that the *Rājas* Khubiraka and Ḍamaka were local rulers heading a democratic assembly (*gōshṭis*) prior to the Mauryan conquest. Such a democratic set up was prevalent during Buddha's life time but came to an end in the North after the rise of Magadhan imperialism. The Mauryan conquest of coastal Andhra was, therefore, probably earlier to Aśokan accession and the religion of Buddha alike came to Andhra almost certainly in the pre-Mauryan age. It is of great import that Aśoka in his IVth pillar edict defines the duties of such Rājukas in the administration.

Except brief notices, we have practically no detailed report on the stratigraphical sequence of Korkai. The site deserves to be carefully excavated on a larger scale and the associated cultural relics, more specially, the stratigraphy of the assemblage going with the sturdy Red Slipped ware and N.B.P., whatever might be its numbers, would be of seminal importance in tracking the spread of early Buddhism and N.B.P. from the ancient Magadha nucleus[38] to Korkai.

Evidences from Kāñchī: Kaverippumpattinam, Uraiyur, etc.

The earliest historical period of Kāñchī (Palar basin), Kaverippumpatinam, Uraiyur (Lower Kaveri) and Alagarai was assigned a date ranging from *circa* third century B.C. to the end of first century B.C. Kāñchī has been dated by c-14 - KCM-1 480 B.C. ± 130 (PRL-22: 2430 ± 130) and another KCM-4 (TF-1228 ± 95) (195 B.C). The c-14 dates give us fairly early dates like the ones at Dharaṇikōta.

The finds are mostly fine Black-and-red ware, brick structural remains whose nature is ambiguous.[39] At Kaverippumpattinam (Ptolemy's *Kaberis Emporion*) in the second century B.C. levels along with the Black-and-red ware, a structure of what appears to have been a wharf, has been exposed.[40] The wood remains were c-14 dated to 316 ± 103 B.C. (TF-207: 226 ± 103).

Excavations at Vallam (*Tanjore*) *and Kodumanal* (*Periyar*)

Recent excavations (March-May 1984 and 1985) by the Tamil University[41] at these two sites, have been, of the nature of trial digs. At Vallam the earliest deposits of Period IA yielded Black-and-red ware with graffiti and a c-14 date of early second century B.C. was obtained. While in Period-IB the very same pottery had no graffiti but a few sherds contained Brāhmī letters. Excavations at Kodumanal yielded rich 1.5 to 2 m. thick strata characterised by the Black-and-red ware with Brāhmī letters. From within a cist circle, at this very site, a pot sherd of Black-and-red ware revealed a name written in Brāhmī characters. This appears to confirm some late survivals among the Megalithic folk in 'Koṅgu' area. This is also confirmed by the earlier discovery of a corroded Bronze coin of Eran type (Allan has assigned a third-second century B.C) from a cist grave at Sulur (Palladam Taluk), silver coins of Augustus (27 B.C. — A.D. 14) along with a hoard of Punch-marked coins from the Megalithic tomb in Coimbatore.[42] Nowhere else the Megaliths yielded evidence of writing and coins. Even in Tamilnadu certain early sites like Paiyampalli, Sittannavasal, Adichanallur have no such basic historical associates. For that matter the punch-marked coins from Tamilnadu[43] (hoards of Mambalam, Kayadi, Tondaimanatham, Bodinaikkanur, Virasingamani and several other stray finds) do not appear even remotely contemporary to the early or even post-Mauryan urban or semi-urban associate assemblage as in Andhra Pradesh. The contexts of Punch-marked silver coins in Karnataka too are admittedly in later contexts, like those of Tamil-

nadu. This is quite understandable because these geographical zones are outside the Mauryan political and economic influences while Andhra Pradesh formed part of the Mauryan empire. The rare and important find of a silver PMC of 5-symbol early Mauryan series from the excavated Phase-1 of the '*Savēdika-Linga-sthala*' at Gudimallam[14] proves beyond doubt its currency in proper cultural context during the period as in the north. Even the more recent PMC coins found in early Phase of Buddhist *stūpas* of Bhattiprolu, Vaddamanu as well as Amaravati *Mahāchaitya* confirm their Mauryan contacts and cultural significance. On the present showing the PMC along with the Roman coins of metallic importance (gold and silver) in extraneous cultural set up like Megaliths are merely survivals percolating somehow to far off regions. More extensive areas have to be carefully tapped under, experienced archaeologists, if we have to find for these, a cultural parity in Tamilnadu-Karnataka as well as Kerala.

We are unable to give any convincing explanation as to where the Aśokan built brick *stūpas* of Kāñchī and Kaveripumpattinam have been? *Dīpavaṁśa* (XVI, 1-3) attests that Aśoka crossed the three countries-Vindhya ranges, forests and came to the ocean, paid a visit to the Tamil country to see his daughter off Śrīlanka. Perhaps, a bigger excavation of the early levels at some of these sites, might provide an answer. Kāñchī was the most vividly known religious centre, a richly colourful and civilized city, *Nagarēshu Kāñchī* and even the emperors as well as intellectuals hailing from the city gained recognition after its great name. For example, *Kāñchīpuraka* in the *Mahābhāshya* of Patañjali, *Kāñchēyaka* Vishṇugōpa in Allahabad Praśastī may be mentioned in this context. Was this all an early medieval glory that went into the literature after the Mahendra Pallava times? There is no doubt that by about the end of second century B.C. several powerful kings were ruling in the eastcoast of Tamilnadu. The Mahāmēghavāhana king Kharavela speaks of a confederacy of the

Tamil countries (*Tramiradeha Samghaṭam*) during his 13th regnal year.[45]

Kerala

How about Kerala? Nannan, the famous war like chieftain of Ezhimalai (Cannanore) praised by many poets as the proud possessor of golden chariots might have been a contemporary of Aśoka Maurya. The earliest Chera capital was Karur. M.G.S. Narayanan says "there is evidence in the earliest cave label inscriptions around the Chera capital of Karur."[46] Archaeological excavations aimed at identifying this early Chera capital have obviously not met with any success. The other suspected site was Thiruvañchikulam, near Cranganore (Kodungalur). This revealed an occupational strata from *circa* eighth century A.D. onwards, while Karur 70 km. from Tiruchirapalli town excavated by the Department of Archaeology, Tamilnadu, has provided some encouraging results. Four periods of cultural strata were noted. Period-I dated to *circa* second-first century B.C. yielded Black-and-red ware and red slipped wares. Period-II dated to first-second century A.D. contained inscribed pottery, Amphorae and Rouletted wares, while Period-III dated to third-fourth century A.D. revealed Russet-coated ware. Sridharan holds that the site "was the ancient capital of Sangam Chera kings,"[47] The dating of the cultural sequence on pottery wares alone is hazardous. K.G. Krishnan equates 'Karur-Vañchī' with Pugalur and says it was a secondary capital of the Cheras during the early centuries of the Christian era. "Vāñchī, the greater metropolis is on the west coast."[48] But Pugalur is worthy of examination again as it is known as Karuvur-vañchi, both in Tamil literature and inscriptions. The place has yielded Roman coins[49] deted to *circa* 37 to 180 A.D.

Arikamedu Excavations

R.E.M Wheeler provided, for the first time, a chronological datum line at Arikamedu (*Podouke* of Periplus) near Pondichery. The earliest horizons were dated to the end

of first century B.C. and the Roman potteries[50] like Arretine to 25-50 A.D., Rouletted and Amphorae to second quarter of first century A.D. The dating of the Rouletted ware and its foreign origin have been questioned now. Even the date of Amphorae has to be revised on the earlier side. Arikamedu was already an important port town before the Roman or Greek advent, and the early historical period here should be bracketed from *circa* 250 B.C. to 200 A.D. It is of great importance to note that at the Dharaṇikota excavations,[51] a wharf and an excavated navigational channel came to light with imported glass objects of various colours, ear-rimgs (milifiori technique), bangles and a seal datable to *circa* second century B.C. These indicate a flourishing Indo-western trade from Dhanyakataka to far off countries before the Roman period. At Arikamedu itself it is felt by Wheeler himself[52] that some of the shapes and fabric of this pottery were indigenous. A distinction has been made between the indigenous Rouletted ware and imported Rouletted wares. The Salihundam evidence not only pushes back the date of the Rouletted[53] ware but also indicates its continuance till the second century A.D. Further, basing on the abundant inscriptional evidence, apart from its structural and stratigraphical associations, the earliest horizons of this ware were assigned to mid-second century B.C. This early date of Salihundam is confirmed again from the recent excavations at the *Mahāchaitya* of Amaravati, as well as Dharaṇikōta, where Rouletted ware begins to appear from the post-Aśokan levels (period-III). In the light of these fresh evidences it is highly relevant to recall the observations of N.P. Chakravarti on the Arika medu inscribed pottery.[54] I quote: "At first sight the script found on the graffiti from Arikamedu appears to belong to the first or second century B.C. when compared with the script of other Brāhmī inscriptions, particularly those found in the north. On the other hand, the date of the pottery as indicated by its association with dated antiquities, is of the first century A.D. or near date. The reason for this discrepancy is not, however, far to seek. The script of the

Arikamedu pottery and the early rock-shelters of the Madura and Tinnevelly districts seems to be more akin to the ancient Draviḍī script than the regular Brāhmī as found in the edicts of Aśoka and other early inscriptions. We also know that the Draviḍī script must hava separated from the main stock of Brāhmī much earlier than the time of Aśoka, at the latest in the fifth century B.C.[55] This is undoubtedly the reason why so many archaic forms are noticed in the few inscriptions so far known in the *Draviḍī* script. The development of forms after separation could not be so fast in *Draviḍī* as in the regular Brāhmī which continued to be used throughout the whole of India. If we bear this point in mind, it would not be unreasonable to assume that, though the script of the Arikamedu graffiti appears to be similar to the script of Brāhmī inscriptions of the first and second centuries B.C., it actually should be relegated to a later period. If this assumption is correct then the so-called discrepancy between the Palaeographic and the archaeological evidence would seem to disappear." What a lengthy explanation to adjust unimpeachable epigraphical evidence into the chronological framework formulated by a field archaeologist?

Let us not underrate the importance of palaeography of the inscribed pottery, for it represents the true style of writing of a commoner, an unsophisticated script, not the stylised or standardised one as on stone or metal inscriptions or other media. Moreover all the inscribed, both among Rouletted as well as plainer wares, pottery have not been studied. Many sherds from J.M. Casal's[56] collection (1949) reveal inscriptions in early Brāhmī characters and they need to be meticulously documented. So the dating of the earliest horizons of the Rouletted ware at Arikamedu, Kaveripattinam (Puhar), Uraiyur (Araguru of Periplus), Korkai and Kāñchī has got to be revised in respect of the initial stages at least to second century B.C.[57]

The rouletted ware is totally absent[58] at such a vastly excavated site as Nagarjunakonda even in pre-Ikshvāku

levels, datable to mid–second century A.D., not to speak of the Ikshvāku period although Amphorae and Roman coins were found to a meagre extent. The russet-coated ware is also not found, both at Nagarjunakonda and Amarāvatī. Thus the terminal date for the rouletted ware as well as the russet-coated wares is some where around the middle of the second century A.D. in the south-east coast. A few survivals here and there should not be counted for purposes of specific chronological fixations. In the light of this, it is very necessary that the horizons of certain diagnostic pottery wares like the Rouletted ware (foreign as well as indigenous), Arrettine,[59] Amphorae (indigenous or foreign) and Roman coins at such historical port sites like Arikamedu, Kaveripattinam, Uraiyur, Korkai and Kāñchī are thoroughly examined afresh and a firm datum line is worked out.

The southern coast has developed several port towns as a consequence of brisk trade. This had led to the accelerated expansion of Buddhism and other Brāhmanical religions too. We have ample testimony of foreign writers like Pliny and Ptolemy and the Periplus accounts. During the first century A.D., the Roman contact led to the establishment of colonies of Jews and Syrian Christians in Kerala. Large hoards of Roman coins from Kottayam and Eyyal are noteworthy. *The archaeology of the Jews or Syrian Christians in Kerala*, their architecture could be undertaken. Notable harbours like Naura, near Cannanore, Tyndis near Quilandy, Bacare near Alleppy and Muziris near Cranganore came up. Muciri was the first emporium of India and second capital of the Cheras. The objects of trade transacted here were ivory, spices, sandal wood and peacocks. The period from the first century A.D. to 400 A.D. marks the first well established epoch in the early historical Archaeology of Tamilnadu and Kerala. The Sangam poetry composed by a galaxy of 473 Tamil poets (*Sangam* or *Cankam*) including women, brāḥmaṇas, Jainas and Buddhists gives us a good account of their period.

Kāñchī in Tondaimandalam tops among the early cities of lower *Draviḍadēśa.* Apart from indigenous accounts we learn from a Chinese text, *Ch'ien Han Shu*, dated to the first century A.D. that Kāñchī is called Huang-che and the Chinese king sent presents to the ruler of Huang-chi.[60] Hiuen Tsang's account mentions a large monastery at *Kanchi-pu-lo* with an Aśokan tope about 100 feet high to the east of the city but has not been located as yet. A monastery, *Dharmāśoka mahārāja vihāra*, is reported to have been built by Mahendra, son of Aśoka near Nagapattinam, a port of embarkation mid-way to Śrīlanka and other countries of south-east Asia. We must confess here that except literary and traditional accounts, no archaeological evidences assignable to the pre-Christian period have come forth to substantiate the presence of Buddhism or coastal trade in the early centuries B.C. Even *Sanghārāmas* of the *Sthāviras* (*Chang-tso-pu*) of the late Pallava times about whom Hiuen Tsang makes specific mention are not to be seen today. But at Kaveripattinam[61] K.V. Raman has successfully traced the Buddhist establishments as mentioned in the Tamil literature. A detailed examination of the structural remains unearthed at the excavation at Kāñchī and Kaveripattinam suggests that during the second-third century A.D. there is a great movement of Buddhist monks and teachers from *Āndhrapatha* to the Toṇḍaimaṇḍalam through the east coast. This movement was backed by flourishing trade.

It is relevant to bring in here an epigraphical discovery of far reaching importance from Pūlānkurichchi, Ramanathapuram District. This huge rock inscription[62] in three sections has also the sketch of a trident on lotus and a battle axe indicating perhaps the royal emblems. The chief donor was a person described as "*Kaḍal-agapperum-paḍai-ttalaivaṉ*" obviously a captain of a big naval forces during the year 192 of Tamil era going after the name of the founder king Chēndan Kūṟṟan who is regarded as belonging to Kaḷabhra family. The record is assigned by

N. Sethuraman to *circa* fourth century A.D.[63] It is important to note that Kāḷabhras had originally come to the south by sea.[64] The king Cēndan Kūṟṟan probably lived in the second century A.D. To this we may now add another discovery by R. Krishna Murthy, Editor, *Dinamalar*, Madras[65] of a square copper coin measuring 2 cm. and weighing 7.45 gms. On the obverse is an elephant tusker to the right with a dangling trunk, the legend overhead in bold characters and anticlockwise towards the flange reads *Kalapirā*, the last letter *ā* resembles the Bhattiprolu script. The reverse is blank. Similar coins seem to have come from Kaveripoompattinam (1971). On typological and Palaeographical grounds, the coin can be assigned to the third-fourth century A.D. and reasonably be assigned to Kāḷabhras, though the king's name is not known. R. Krishna Murthy[66] has also brought to light some other coins of this period. A square die-struck coin measuring 1.7 cm. in diametre and weighing 1.100 gms. reveals a robust horse moving to left, the legend on top reads *Peruvaḷuthi* in Brāhmī characters of the second-third century A.D. Another coin, a rectangular one (2.2 × 1.5 and weight 2.900 gms.) has on its obverse an elephant, sides clipped, and on the reverse a fiish symbol, suggesting its Pāṇḍyan affiliation. The clippings clearly indicate that the coin was in curreucy and adjusted to the weight standard. Probably the earliest coins in lead from Tamilnadu come from the Āṇḍipatti hoard, North Arcot District. They possessed a legend in Tamil-Brāhmī characters of second century A.D. reading *Tiṉṉan edirāna Chēṇdaṉ*. (Mahalingam, however, reads, *Atiṉam Etirān sindan*)[67] with the symbols like mount or arched-hill, wavy line etc. These might be the issues of another Kāḷabhra king, perhaps a near contemporary of king Chēndan Kuṟṟan. These coins are prototypes of the latter Sātavāhanas issues. From the early centuries of the Christian era we find clear evidences of *Mahānāvikas* (master mariners) at port towns like Ghatansala (Ptolemy's Kantakossyla) in district Krishna; *Māhānagaparvata* at Guntupalli, district West Godavari,

closer to the ancient capital of Veṅgī. Almost contemporary to the above Kāḷabhra Chief-navigator, we get one Buddhagupta, a native of *Raktamṛittikā Mahāvihāra* (Rangamati, district Murshidabad, West Bengal), sailing to the Malay Peninsula. It is noteworthy that all these master mariners were Buddhists.[68] Chinese silks noticed in *Damirika* by the author of the periplus were perhaps shipped from Tamluk having come overland from North China by way of Lhasa. The famous Kāñchī silk industry seems to have originated out of these Chinese contacts during the early centuries A.D., although we are yet to authentically document the silk remains from the early historical strata of this site. But surely by aboutsecond-third century A.D. Vijayapur Ikshvākus[69] wore the '*Chīna-cholaka*' (full-sleeved coat or tunic), which is of Chinese origin. Buddhist teachers, monks, nuns, frequented from Śrīparvata, Ceylon to China and *vice versa* as the Śrīparvata (Nagarjunakonda) and recently Lihinimalai, (district Kandy), Śrīlankan inscriptions testify.[70]

The *Mahāsānghika* schools, like *Chaityaka*, *Śailas* and *Mahāvihāravāsins* with their epicentres at Śrīparvata (Nagarjunakonda) and Dhānyakaṭaka spread over the intermediary regions too on the east coast on their way to Srilanka and beyond. As a result, we can see clearly that at Kaveripattinam and Kāñchī excavations, more specifically at Kaveripattinam, not only Buddhist *Vihāras* and *stūpas* but also cult objects like Buddha *pādas* of Palnad lime stone, metal images[71] of Buddha for personal worship and *chaitya gṛihas* of the same type as at Nagarjunakonda-Amarāvatī, have come to light. It is surprising that during this period the Mahāsānghika sects from Dharanikota-Amaravati reached far and wide. We find the sculptural art as well as cult objects of Palnad stone in the interiors of Karnataka such as Hampi, Sannathi, Banavasi, Aihole and several other sites. The brick apsidal *Chaitya gṛiha* measuring 26 x 13.5 m. exposed at Banavasi is regarded as one of the largest *chaitya* of the Sātavāhana in South

India.[72] From Andhra the Buddhist followers visited Vanavasi and we also get plenty of references to the visit of the monks to Śrīparvata, Śrīlanka and Vanavasa and to several other countries again from Śrīparvata. That at Kāñchī also during this period a special *chaitya* with Buddha *pādas* and *vihāra* was extant at *Dharmadāvana,* as the interesting *Maṇimēkhalai* account reveals. The Buddhist *stūpa*[73] and monastery exposed near the Kāmākshiamman Temple area in period I-B, dated to second-fourth century A.D. might be identified with this. The Sātavāhana-Ikshvāku cultural influence into the Tondaimandalam area is revealed by the coins of Rudra from Kāñchī (12-coins of lead) apart from the Roman amphorae and brick structures There seems to be a virtual transportation of cult objects and pillars of palnad[74] lime stones as seen from the ruins of stumps of square pillars on the front under the granite floor slabs of the smaller west facing *Rājasiṁhēś-vara gṛiha* at the Shore Temple complex. There are traces of brick structures and lime stone workings over the back of the hill containing the large *maṇḍapa* caves at Mahabalipuram itself. A careful probe might yield a pre-Pallava phase of art at this place which might be aligned to the Buddhist *maṇḍapa* and *chaityas* of the Nagarjunakonda type. At Punjeri, *i.e.*, Puhum-Ceri village at first entry situated just one-and-half km. to the west of Mamallapuram on the western bank of the Buckingham canal several remains of structers and pottery, besides, ruined Megalithic stone circles and urn burials in its vicinity were noted. This appears to be a potential site worthy of excavation.[75] A lime stone panel of the Nagarjunakonda type was also reported from a temple at Royapettah in Madras.[76] In the pre-Pallava period Kāñchīpuram area was perhaps under the latter Sātavāhanas, their allies Nāga-kings - and subsequently came under the Ikshvāku infiuences, though not political but of Buddhist and Brāhmaṇical cults.[77] It is generally held that Kāñchī was the capital of the Pallavas of Siṁhavishṇu line. Recently two Pallava grants came to light, the first one from Gudur

(Dt. Nellore) and the second one from Bobbeyapalli (Taluk Adoni, Dt. Prakasam), We learn that Kāñchī was the capital city even before Simhavarman-I.[78] The latter record dated in the 13th regnal year of Kumāravishṇu mentions this ruler as a great grandson of Vīrakurchavarman, the founder of the Pallava dynasty, grandson of Karāḷavarman and son of Skandamūla-I. It is known that the Adoni region (Dt. Prakasam) was under Skandanāga, the Sātavahana Viceroy, and Vīrakurchavarman-I, according to late T.V. Mahālingam,[79] rose to power as the result of Nāga matrimonial connections. I would not like to debate here on the historical and geographical implications of these new records — but suffice it to say, that there is need to tackle on a large scale, and systematically too, the early fortifications of the Kāñchī city whose traces were found at Pallavamedu[80] excavation. The "*Kāñchēyaka Vishṇugopa*" of the Samudragupta's *praśasti* was indeed a king and the Gudur plates state that Simhavarman-II, the donee was the son of Yuvarāja Vishṇugopa. According to an interesting analysis of Buddha Prakash the Gupta king Samudragupta[81] took to the then popular east coast route and subdued all the powers of coastal Āndhra right upto Kāñchī and asserted his influence on Ceylon too. The long south-east coast line was dotted with several convenient anchorages right from Tamralipti, Kalingapatnam, Vengi, Maisolia (*Mahishamaṇḍala*), Krishnapatnam, (Nellore), Mailai (Mylapur), Kaveripumpattinam, Nagapattinam, Korkai and perhaps several others. Kāñchī, in particular, grew as a centre of *Theravada* Buddhism in South India during the subsequent centuries. A galaxy of Buddhist teachers like Buddhadatta, Aravaṇa Adigal, Bodhidharamma (370-520 A.D. founder of Dhyāna Buddhism), *Vajrabodhi* (*Tantrik* Buddhism, Diṅnāga (*Nyaya* school) and Vinītaruchi (582) were from Kāñchī. Dharmapāla lived in a *Vihāra* named *Paratittai*, near Kāñchī. The cradle of *Pāramitayāna* and *Vajrayāna* was in South India, around Śrīparvata, Dhānyakataka, Potalaka and *Oḍḍiyāṇa* (i.e. Kāñchī), which are in coastal tracts of Bndhra and

Tamilnadu. *Prajñāpāramita sūtras* were declared, for the first time, on the mountain at Kaḷukulamalai (*gṛidhra-kūṭa*), near the city of Madurai. This very zone assumed great importance due to the rise of *Tāntrik* Buddhism. Lokesh Chandra[82] opines that it was not Bengal, Orissa or Assam but *Oḍḍiyāṇa* (meaning a girdle '*Mani-mekhala*' standing for Kāñchī) and Āndhradeśa were the chief centres transmitting *tāntrik* Buddhism to Indonesia and China. By about the eighth-ninth century A.D. this coastal' "perfume route" gained prominence and the port towns of south-east China, namely, Quan Zhau and Guang Zhou played a great role, in diffusing the cultural elements through commercial contact from south-east India and Ceylon. Not only Buddhism but the brāhmaṇical religion too reached China and temples were built during the Tang period. The records of the Tang dynasty (618-907) mention the existence of three brāḥmaṇical temples in Guangzhou (Canton), the soutrehernmos city of China. From the Chinese sources "Sungh Shih, Sung-hui-yao" we learn that the Chōḷa kings sent embassies to China — in 1015, 1020, 1033 and 1077 A.D. The one sent in 1015 A.D. must have been by the great Rāja Rāja–I and the rest by his successors. Late T.N. Subramanian[83] made a pioneering study of these contacts between South Indian ports and China during the medieval period and even edited a bilingual and bi-scriptural (Tamil and Chinese) stone inscription dated to 1281 A.D. found in the street of *Wu Pau* (Dec, 1956) in the port town of Quan Zhou (Fujian Province).

The Chinese copper coins, earlier reported from the excavations at the famous sites Chandravalli[84] (district Chitradrug in Karnataka), Arikamedu and Korimedu (near Pondichery) which were wrongly assigned to the early historical period were identified as the issues of the Sung emperors (1023 A.D.) on a thorough reexamination.[85] The stratigraphical analysis at both these excavations needs, therefore, a fresh examination.

Further, we need to realise, more urgently than ever, Mortimer Wheeler's dictum "Have a plan and having a plan, see that the plan is worthwhile, is likely to add significantly to our knowledge of the human mind and human achievement".[86] Wheeler took the classical peoples — Greeks for North-West India and Romans for South India as the basis[87] for archaeological field work and inevitable prejudices that resulted are manifest when he graded the cultures of the early historic India as 'Barbarian' and 'inferior'. As Graham Clark has rightly cautioned "I believe the best preparation is to be educated both in the history of one's own tradition and in the broader perspectives of anthropology" and specially of South India "Historical and Literary scholarship have at least much to contribute by way of posing significant questions as anthropology"[88]

Let us get ready to gather more archaeological facts on the ancient cities and towns like Amaravati-Dharanikota, Isila, Banavasi, Kāñchī, Kaverippumpattinam and Korkai.

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2. M.G.S. Narayanan, *Reinterpretations in South Indian History*, (Trivandrum, 1977), pp.83-98; Also "Mauryan Problem in Sangam Works in Historical Perspectives" *Journal of Indian History*, LIII (Aug. 1975), Pt.ii, pp.245-254.

3. *The Hindu*, dated 9-10-1981; See K.G. Krishnan, Views in *Dinamani*, 12-10-1981, p.2.

4. *Theravadins* must have touched the place in an earlier wave before the *Mahāsānghikas*. However, H. Sarkar sees no *Theravādi* impact, see *Studies in Early Buddhist Architecture of India* (New Delhi, 1968), pp.99-100.

5. *Tamil Civilization,* Vol.I, no.3 (June, Sept. 1983). But it might be noted that in the Ikshvāku period (Third-fourth century A.D) Śrīlanka is referred to as *Taṁbapaṇṇi dīpa* and the monks as *Theriyānaṁ* (*Tambapa*(*ṁ*) *nakānaṁ*). In the very same record in line-3, we get *Sihaḷavihara.* So the island was knowu by both the names. *Epigraphica Indica,* XX, Inscription F, line-1 and 3; *Epigraphica Indica,* XXXIII, p.250, line-1.

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7. *Indian Historical Quarterly,* (Calcutta, 1955), Vol. XXXI, p. 68.

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15. A lively debate took place between S.P. Gupta, D. Chakravarty and M.C. Joshi, see *Puratattva*, no. 6 (1972-73), pp. 26-36; *Ibid.*, no. 7 (1974), pp. 53-58, 87-89 and 90-91.

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25. S.B. Deo, *History of Jaina Monachism from Inscriptions," and Literature*, (Pune, 1956), p. 342.

26. K.G. Krishnan, "Cera Kings of the Pugalur Inscriptions", *Journal of Ancient Indian History*, (Calcutta, 1970-71), IV, Pts. 1-2, pp. 137-143.

27. *South Indian Inscriptions*, Vol. XVII, no. 262.

28. T.V. Mahalingaṃ, "Studies in South Indian Archaeology, Epigraphy, Architecture and Sculpture", *Memoirs of the Archaeological Society of South India*, no. 2, (Madras, 1978).

29. K.V. Raman, "Archaeological Investigations in the Recent Past — Tamilnadu and Kerala", in B.K. Guru Raja Rao (ed.) *A Decade of Archaeological Studies in South India*, (Dharvad, 1978). In this work Archaeological and epigraphical discoveries are covered in respect of other states, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh too. See specially A.V, Narasimha Murthy (ed.) *Archaeology of Karnataka*, (Mysore, 1978), Sections II, nos. 13 and III and IV.

30. K.S. Ramachandran, *Archaeology of South India — Tamil Nadu*, (New Delhi, 1980), pp. 90-132.

31. R. Nagaswamy in *Damilica*, (Dec., 1970), pp. 50-51; Also *Indian Archaeology* — 1969-70 — *A Review*, pp. 63-69.

32. S. Gurumurthy, *Ceramic Traditions in South India*, (Madras, 1981), pp. 122, 125-126.

33. It is surprising that no mention of NBP is made in *Indian Archaeology* — 1968-69 — *A Review*, pp. 32-33 by the excavator.

34. I.K. Sarma "Early Sculptures and Epigraphs from South East India: New Evidences from Amaravati" in Fredrick Asher and G.S. Gai (ed.) *Indian Epigraphy: Its Bearing on the History of Art*, (New Delhi, 1985), pp. 15-23; Also see "Northern Black Polished Ware from Amaravati Excavations (1974-75), and 14C Dates" *Prof. R.C. Majumdar's Commemoration Volume of Bhāratī*, Benaras Hindu University, Varanasi (in press).

35. T.V.G. Sastry (ed.) *Vaddamanu Excavations and Explorations in Krishna Valley* (BACRI, Hyderabad, 1983), pp. 4-5. The exact number of NBP sherds and sequence is not clear, from the report. However, see *IAR*, 1982-83, pp. 2-3, A potsherd with *Vaḍhama* (*IAR*, 1982-83, p. 17) indicates the early form of the place name. This sherd is datable to 2nd century A.D. See PL. 2. T.V.G. Sastry in a recent paper in Telugu *Bhāratī*, November, 1986, pp. 11-14 restated that Vaddamanu *Stūpa* was of Jaina affiliation. We disagree with his views and propose to examine critically his reading of the inscriptions elsewhere.

36. I.K. Sarma "Some Aspects of Bhaṭṭiprōlu Casket Inscriptions", *Journal of the Epigraphical Society of India*, (Dharwar, 1982), Vol. IX, pp. 23-25; Also see "Some Important Epigraphical Discoveries from Vaddamanu" *Giridharaśrī Prof. G.S. Dixit Felicitation Volume* (New Delhi, 1986).

37. Further he finds in the Bhaṭṭiprōlu Casket Records as the earliest metrical verses at least two *mātra vrittas* (*Uttarā vritti and Udgite* Kātyāyana a *Dākshinātya*, is the earliest writer to employ *mātra-vrittas* and he also belonged to pre-Mauryan period. S. Sankaranarayanan, "Some pages in Early Cultural History of Andhya", *Svasti Śrī, Dr. B. Ch. Chhabra Felicitation Volume*, (New Delhi, 1984), pp. 16-65.

38. I,K. Sarma, "14c Dates, N.B.P. Ware and Early Historical Archaeology of Peninsular India", *Journal of Indian History*, LII, Pt, 1, (April, 1974), pp. 49-56.

39. Near Kāmākshiamman Temple, KCM-4 digs *IAR*, 1969-70, p. 34; 1970-71, pp. 32-33. The renewed digs also confirm the non-Buddhist nature of the earliest brick structures. *Indian Archaeology* — 1972-73, *A Review*, p. 30.

40. *Indian Archaeology* — 1963-64, *A Review*, p. 20.

41. Y. Subbarayalu, "The Future of Archaeology in Tamilnadu" *Paper Circulated by the Registrar*, Tanjore University (July, 1985).

42. *Ancient India*, no. 9 (New Delhi, 1953), pp. 112-113. In fact this is the earliest find of PMC discovered in Indiā in 1800 by Col. Caldwell.

43. T.V. Mahalingam. *Op. cit.*, (1978), pp. 101-104.

44. I.K. Sarma, *Op. cit.*, pp. 47, 50, ph. 17.

45. D.C. Sircar, *Select Inscriptions*, (1965), I, (p, 217.)

46. M.G.S. Narayanan (ed) *Kerala Through the Ages*, (Calicut, 1980), pp. 9-10.

47. K. Sridharan "Karūr Excavations", "*Paper read at the Seminar, Tamil University* (Tanjore, June, 1984).

48. *Journal of Ancient Īndian History*, Vol. IV, (Calcutta, 1970-71). p. 142.

49. H. Sarkar, *Monuments of Kerala*, (New Delhi, 1973), p. 3.

50, R.E.M. Wheeler, "Arikamedu An Indo-Roman Trading station on the East Coast of India", *Ancient India*, no. 2, (New Delhi, 1946), pp. 22, 34-35.

51. K. Raghavachari, "Dharanikota and its Western contacts", *Quarterly Review of Historical Studies*, XII, no. 3, (1972-72), pp. 1-3; *Ibid.*, 1963-64, pp. 2-3 and 1964-65, pp. 2-3, Pl. la.

52. R,E.M. Wheeler, *Op. cit.*, pp. 45-48.

53. R. Subrahmanyam, *Salihundam — A Buddhist site in Andhra Pradesh*, (Hyderabad, 1964), pp. 8-9.

54. *Ancient India*, no. 2, pp. 109-119.

55. G. Buhler, "Indian Palaeography", in *Indian Antiquary*, XXXIII, Appendix, p. 8.

56. J.M. Casal, *Fouilles de Virampatnam — Arikamedu*, (Paris, 1949). Many potsherds, mended rather badly with copper wire clamps are exhibited in the Government Museum, Pondichery have not been included by I. Mahadevan in his *Corpus on Tamil — Brāhmī Inscriptions*, (1970). I am thankful to Shri Raja Ram, Curator, Pondichery Govt. Museum. Also for a re-examination of the Arikamedu evidences see Vimala Beglay, "Arikamedu Reconsidered", *American Journal of Archaeology*, Vol. 87, no. 4, pp. 461-481.

57. At Vanagiri site (Kaveripattinam excavations), a silver PMC and black Rouletted ware shreds of local manufacture were associated with 2nd century B.C. levels. See K.V. Raman in *DASSI*, pp, 4-5.

58, H. Sarkar, "Kesarapalli, 1962", *Ancient India*, no. 22, (New Delhi, 1966), p. 44.

59. True Arretine is found only at Arikamedu. Uraiyur specimens are of Rouletted ware only and not Arretine. See also Guru Murthy, *Op. cit.*, p. 299, K.V. Raman says that Arretine (one sherd) is found in Kāñchi, cf. *DASSI*, p. 6 also *Indian Archaeology* 1970-71, *A Review*, p. 32.

60. H. Sarkar in *Vivekananda Commemoration Volume*, (Madras 1970), p. 328.

61. *Indian Archaeology* — 1964-65, *A Review*, pp. 24-25; Melaiyur; K.S. Ramachandran, *op. cit.*, p. 124.

62. R, Nagaswamy, "An Outstanding Epigraphical Discovery in Tamilnadu" — paper presented at the *Vth World Tamil Conference* (Madurai, January, 1981). For a detailed interpretation see Natana Kasinathan, "Pulankuricci Inscription — A Re look" (*Paper read at the Poondi conference*, (Madras 31st March, 1985),

63. N. Sethuraman, "Astronomical Data of Pulankurichi Inscription" in *Śrīnidhiḥ*, *K.R. Srinivasan Festschrift*, (Madras, 1983), pp. 285-291. Sri Sethuraman has offered the most possible date of mid 4th century A.D. The date portion reads "*Kōch-Chēndan Kūṟṟarku Yāḍḍu* (year) 192 and *nān* 36th *Pakkaṉ Tai Piṟai nāl*" 36th day of the year 192 *Tai* month (Tamil solar month of *Kārtikai* or *Markali*) of an era founded in the name of *Cēndan Kūṟṟ*an. Besides, this record gives very interesting details of army, police as well as two *devakulams*, *kottam* for Jaina saint, a *pirammatayam* i.e., *Brhamadeyam*, *Ulavya perumtinai*, transit revenue staff and *Narpartinai*, revealing to us how effectively village administration was organised during the Sangam age.

64. K.V. Ramesh, in Noboru Koroshima, (ed.) *op. cit.*, (Madras, 1985), p. 5.

65. *News ToDay*, *Madras*, (Tuesday, June 18, 1985).

66. R. Krishnamurthy, "Sānkam period Pandia Coins with Tamil-Brāhmī Legends", paper read at the *72nd Session of the Numismatic Society of India*, (Benaras, March, 1985). I am thankful to the author for sending the article with illustrations for my study.

67. *TASSI*, (Madras, 1978), p. 105.

68. I.K. Sarma, *Buddhist Monuments of China and South East India*, (New Delhi, 1985), pp. 87-88 and 90-91.

69. K. Krishna Murthy, *Nagarjunakonda — A Cultural Study*, (New Delhi, 1977), pp. 40, 51, fig. III-no. 9, fig. IV, no. 18.

70. Saddamangala Karunaratna, "Śrīlankan Epigraphy: Its Bearing on Art History", in Asher and Gai, (ed.), *Op. cit.*, (1985), pp. 245-247.

71. *Indian Archaeology* — 1962-63, *A Review*, p. 13, *Ibid.*, 1963-64, p. 24; Pls. XXXIII — XXXIV; *Ibid.*, 1973-74, p. 25 At Pallavanēśvaram Site. See also K. S. Ramachandran, *op. cit.*, (1980), p. 123. For Further digs See *IAR*, 1977-78, p. 50.

72. Banavasi (Dist. North Kanara) Inscription; *Journal of the Epigraphical Society of India*, I (Mysore, 1974), pp. 34-39; *Epigraphia Indica*, XXXIV, p. 238 (Nāga Muchilinda slab) *Deccan Herald*, dated 19.7.1974 Hampi, *JESI*, Vol. VII, pp. 8-11. Buddhist pillar inscription on stone, a stucco head and more recently brick *vihāras* also have been unearthed; Sannati: *ARIE*, 1966-67, nos. B. 203-205; 228-33; *Ibid.*, 1968-69 nos. B. 82-97: M. Seshadri, "Buddhist Monuments in Mysore" *Artibus Asiae*, XXXIV, no. 213 (1972), pp. 169-170; For a recent compilation of all Buddhist inscriptions from this place see M.S. Nagaraja Rao, in Fredrick Asher and G.S. Gai, (ed), *op. cit.*, (1985), pp. 41-45; A *grihiṇi* from *Simhala* is identified at p. 43. PL. 71. This is apparently due to the wrong reading of the text. The correct reading is (*gha*) *riniya Sihaḍīya...hamana deya*" referring to a *grihiṇī* whose name is Simhaḍi and such proper names of femals as Guḍa Naḍi are common in the records of Sannati; See *Ibid.*, p. 42, pl. 58; Also see S. Nagaraju, "Karnataka's Contacts with Ceylon", in *Śrīkanṭhikā*, (Mysore, 1973), pp. 153-154; Mayalur Plates of Chaḷukya Vijayāditya (700 A.D.), credit him as "*Simhaḷādi dvipādhipa*", *Ep. Ind.*, XXXIII, p. 313; Aihole and Pattadakal *Śrīkanṭhikā*, pp. 23-28, PL. V: *East* and *West*, Vol., nos. 1-2 (1969), pp. 126-138. S. Settar takes the brick temples of Aihole as Buddhist *Viharas* which is disputed by others.

73. *IAR*, 1969-70, p. 35. Also *IAR*, 1970-71, p. 32. For sequence see *IAR*, 1974-75, pp. 37-38.

74. K.R. Srinivasan, "Temples of the Later Pallavas", in Pramod Chandra (ed), *Studies in Indian Temple Architecture*, (Varanasi, 1975), pp. 207-208.

75. D. Dayalan, "New light on the Location of the Ancient Seaport of Mamallapuram", *Seminar Papers* (Tanjore University, May, 1984).

76. *The Hindu*, dated 7th December, 1976.

77. K.V. Soundara Rajan, "The Sātavāhana Legacy of Indian Art" *Śrīkanṭhikā*, (Mysore, 1973), pp. 14-15.

78. I.K. Sarma, "Presidential Address-Ancient Andhra", *Proceedings of the Andhra Pradesh History Congress*, *VIth Session*, (Hyderabad, 1982), p. 21; P. Parabrahma Sastry, in *Bhāratī*, May, 1982 (Telugu monthly).

79. T.V. Mahalingam, *Kāñchīpuram in Early South Indian History*, (Asia, 1969), pp. 19-20.

80. *IAR*, 1953-54, p. 12; *IAR*, 1970-71, p. 33. Dept. of Archaeology, Govt. of Tamilnadu excavations.

81. Buddha Prakash, "Samudragupta's Southern Campaign", *Prof. K.A. Nilankanta Sastri's Felicitation Volume*, (Madras, 1971), pp. 15-31.

82. Taranatha calls Kāñchī as *Urgyāna*: Lokesh Chandra, "Oḍḍiyāṇa A New Interpretation", *International Journal of Dravidan Linguistics*, (Trivandrum, Jan. 1980), p. 127, and "Kāñchī and the cultural Efflorescence of Asia" in *Tamil Civilisation*, Vol. 3 no. 4, pp. 9-21 (Tanjore, 1985).

83. T.N. Subramanian, "A Tamil Colony in Medieval China", in R. Nagaswamy (ed), *South Indian Studies*, (SAHER Publication, no. 1, Madras, 1978), pp. 1-52. We get a report of various inscribed architectural members and icons of Brāhmanical temples from the same town from Mr. Narayana Chandra Sen, See *Indian Express*, Dec, 6, 1983. This is only a rediscovery.

84. *Archaeological Survey of Mysore, Annual Report*, (1910), p. 44.

85. Noboru Koroshima "Relations Between South India and China in Chola Times", *Prof. K.A.N. Sastri's Felicitation Volume*, (Madras, 1971.

86. R.E.M. Wheeler, *Still Digging*, (London, 1955), p. 231.

87. Graham Clark, "Sir Mortimer and Indian Archaeology", *Wheeler Memorial Lectures*, 1978 (New Delhi, 1979), pp. 64-65.

88. *Ibid.*, pp. 65 and 73. See an interesting Presidential Address *Indian Archaeological Society Annual Congress*, 1982, delivered by Mrs D. Mitra, Director General, Archaeological Survey of India, (Rtd.); "Recent Archaeological Activities in India" *Purātattva*, no. 12, pp. 4-5.

CHAPTER II

RELIGION IN ART AND ARCHAEOLOGY OF SOUTH-INDIA

Several experiments must have been carried out in Art and Architecture during the Pre-Āgamic period in South India, as in the North. Though abundant textual data exists, we have several gaps in the evidences pertaining to the 'Form' of the God, His 'House' and the 'Ritual', before the advent of the historical period.

Surprisingly, the earliest representations of what appear to be somewhat closer to the historical Śiva and Durgā or Pārvatī, can be seen in the environs of Boghazkoy (famous for the inscribed tablet in Hittite cuneiform script in Akkadian language), at the site called Yazilikaya (just two km. east of Boghazkeui) in a Rock-cut sanctuary dated to 13th century B.C. A long panel carved in bas-relief reveals sixty-six Gods and Goddesses facing each other in procession.[1] Most important among this group, almost life-size and placed centrally, were three figures, a God Teshub standing on a bull, a Goddess called Hepat (Hebat) on the Lionness and the son named Sharruna (Śaravaṇa) standing somewhat behind the Goddess. H.C. Raychaudhuri[2] drew close similarities between Rudra and the Hittite male God Teshub. Not only in physical character, *Vāhanas*, but the weaponry like the three-pronged thunderbolt, bow, trident, mace, battle axe and dagger etc. bear close resemblance to the vedic, epic and *purāṇic* textual ascriptions like *Vajrabāho*, *Dhanvī*, *Pinākin*, *Triśulin*, *Paraśvadhāyudha*, and *Paṭṭiśa* to the God. Representations of this deity were found at Malatia, in the Zinjerli sculp-

ture, in the monument at Isbekjür, and on a stele at Babylon. His spouse is the great mother-Goddess revered as *Mā* in Cappadocia and in different names in Anatolia and the neighbouring lands. She stands on a Lionness or Panther (*Simhavāhinī* or *Bhrāmari*). Nirad C. Choudhuri[3] sees in this Hittite devine couple "Certainly the prototypes of Śiva and Pārvatī", connceted with mountains and perhaps they, "travelled from Mesopotamia to India with the Āryans in their eastward migration." For the students of South Indian history and iconography, specially of Tamilnadu, such representations raise more questions. It is seen that this divine family has invariably been portrayed on the rock sanctuaries (back wall of the *Garbha*), and in structural temples of the Early Pallava period.[4] Could it be then that this Royal house of the Pallavas has origins in the Iranian or Pahlava territories? Long ago Rice and Venkayya held the name "Pallava" as a corrupt form of *Pārthava*, *Pārthiva* or *Pārthia* and Pallavas were regarded as of Persian origin.[5] What were the routes of migration, how and in what manner the religious and iconographic concepts took shape are presently elusive to us, as a yawing gap, both chronological and geographical, remains to be filled by persuasive field research.

Broadly contemporary to the above Yazilikaya figures, certain clay figures were reported from the Chalcolithic village culture site of Inamgaon[6] in Nasik district of Maharashtra. An unbaked figure 5.7 cm. height, anthropomorph type, was found in a clay box with a tight lid (12 x 5 cm). Another robust figure without a head (a *kabandha*) was found outside and nearby a bull is placed. Provision exists to mount the figure on the bull.[7] This is the earliest Human figure standing on bull. In the Late Jorwe levels (900 B.C), a new class of male figures of unbaked clay with short hands and legs, flat chest, conelike head were found. Similar figures are made now on special occasions in clay or turmeric or *haldi* and worshipped as Gaṇeśa, the *mangala mūrti*. A unique gaint figure in

granite from Mottur[8] (North Arcot) Megalith, resembling in form the copper anthropomorph figure, came to light. The figure measures 3.25 m. high and almost of the same width. It formed part of the lithic appendage, planted firmly to a depth of 70 cm. inside a pit. It faces south. It is locally called *'Valiyar-daivamu'* and still worshipped. Another example was recently reported by R. Nagaswamy (1982) in the midst of Megalithic dolmens in the village Udaiyanattam of South Arcot district. Locally called as 'Visirik-kal' (fan stone), this is carved out of a huge granitoid rock, 3.5 m. high and 2.7 m. wide and about 15 cm. thick, more or less, of the same dimensions as that of Mottur example. Such anthropomorph stones in association with the megalithic tombs were located at Mallur, Kadapru on the banks of Godavari (1968), Kaperlaguru (1877) and also at Aihole. R. Nagaswamy aligns all these figures to Mother-Goddess cults.[9] In the protohistoric assemblages in South India evidences are too meagre but nevertheless certain significant finds stand as potential indicators of the emerging religious trends.

Metal objects like Mother Goddess, Horned masks, Trisūla (three-pronged), with a goat tied at one end, single-pronged spike (*śūlaṁ*) and Javeline (*ayaḥ-śūlikāḥ*), the wild fowl in bronze, iron-Hammer-base etc. were found interned in the Megalithic[10] burials. The fact remains that the very same type of objects are intimately connected with the worship of brāhmaṇical Gods of the historical period, such as *Śiva, Kārtikeya* and later *Aṁbā*.[11] The diadems of Adichanallur burials are like the mouth-pieces used by the devotees of Murugan. Coiled bracelets, snake-hoods, bronze and pottery lids of vessels decorated with animal figures and birds from Adichanallur are like the ones from Khapa and Mahurzhari megaliths in Maharashtra.[12] The Malabar terracotta sarcophagus with female utere (Govt. Museum, Madras, No. 21), emphasizes the Goddess mother earth. Such nude representations standing for Fertility are also found in Mauryan, post-Mauryan, Sâtavâhana-Ikshvâku

periods in terracotta. Stons discs, small plaques, as also big sculptured figures without head, or symbolised lotus or vegetal motifs were found.

As witness to the survival or better say continuity of cults in the early historical assemblages of South India[13] terracotta figures like Mother Goddess, Nāga-*liṅga* etc., from Tirukkampuliyur; a seated Gaṇēśa from Alagarai; *Vrikshadevatā* and Mother Goddess from Kaveripakkam and Kāñchīpuram, in almost certainly a pre-Pallava sequence, are interesting examples.

Coming to the specific archaeological excavations, in recent years, the case I am presenting here is entirely new. It is the result of not merely a study of 'Architectural Archaeology' as Pramod Chandra[14] would tell us but also based on an intensive examination and correlation of the data collected from a careful probe into the very foundations of an ancient but live temple complex. This indeed is the 'New Archaeology' for Indian cirumstances, like the one BinFord[15] has advocated for pre and protohistoric investigations elsewhere. The stratigraphical dig within the *Garbhagṛiha* (PL.2) of the Paraśurāmēśvara Temple at Gudimallam, district Chittoor, A.P., paid us rich dividends and brought to light refreshingly new evidences hitherto unknown to the Indian Temple studies. Those of you interested can study my published[16] account. However, I would emphasize the salient features in brief with the specific aim that further researches should be planned in Tamilnadu at the temple sites where exactly the very same traditional and literary accounts emphasize hoary antiquity to the extant religious edifices of the medieval period.

The earliest Phase-1 at this *Śivasthala* or say *naishṭhika-Sthāna* is dated to the Mauryan period with the help of stratigraphy and associated objects like black-and-red pottery, punch-marked silver coin and iron objects, etc. The symbolism of this unique *Liṅga,* one of the earliest exatnt realistic emblem[17] of Śiva and "most perfect piece

of its class and of great value in connection with the history and nature of the *Linga* worship",[1] was fully manifest in this structural set up unearthed below. It was found fixed within two circular *pīṭhas* at the centre of a square *vāstu-maṇḍala* drawn on a levelled and prepared ground. (Fig. 1) A closely set three-barred rail, *Vedikā*, seggregated the deity from the nearby habitation while its foundational details, associated pottery wares and other objects clearly provide a Mauryan date. The evidence of unburnt bones of *Bos*, pig and goat bearing cut-marks found, for the first time, in a hypaethral shrine at such an early date point to the offer of the animal flesh to the deity. The deity on the frontal face of the tall *linga* reveals Himself as a proto-*purāṇic* Agni-Rudra carrying a dead *Yajña-paśu* (goat), after its flesh was removed. The animal skin only (*ajina*) was held with the thumb and central two fingers, leaving the last and the second fingers free. An *ājya-pātra* in the left palm along with *daṇḍa-paraśu* resting against the shoulder fully illustrates the emergence of the Rudra-*Yajamāna* (PL. 3) from the Vedic *Stambha* or altar. More interesting is the *bhūta* or *asura* like *devayāna* unwillingly bearing the load of this mighty God. He possesses *mīnapādas* symbolising an aquatic origin. (PL. 4 (A)). In its phase-2 the railed *Śiva-thala* was brought under a *garbha-griha* literally the "house of the womb". A brick apsidal temple was raised by about the first-second century A.D. as per the emerging style of the *Vāstu*. (Fig. I) The associated pottery wares, like the Russet-coated Andhra ware, raised lime floor characterise this change, but the railing around the *linga* set-up remained undisturbed. There appears to be no *abhisheka* or regular *archana* even in Phase-2 but merely *argha*, that too perhaps, very occasional (*naimittika*), as neither structural arrangements nor any inscriptional provisions were made.

This set-up continued for quite a long period till about the end of the 8th century A.D. which witnessed the heralding of the classical *āgamic* phase in the temple art, now in

stones, with the advent of late Pallava-Bāṇa rule over the region. The *Vedikā* was levelled up by sizing off the projecting verticals, a neat stone floor was laid, a rectangular *pītha* in two bits was fitted to the standing *linga* from either ends without, however, disturbing the *mūla-pratishṭha* but partly covering the *guhya* who was no more of any significance to the earld medieval renovators. Even the inscriptions of the Bāṇa-Chōla period contain the usual descriptive phraseology of the God Śiva, although none of these attributes can be correlated to or alinged to the *Liṅga* or the form of the God there on. The *Liṅga-pītha* has now a *vārimārga* to serve the ritual of *nitya-abhisheka*, for *purānic* Śiva is *abhisheka-priya* not *argha-priya*, and *archana, thīrtha* and of course *prasāda* (due to influence of Vaishṇa cults), were now perpetual *(nitya)* and provisions were made by the rulers as well as by the public. Thus a total transformation took place in the *pūjā-Vidhāna* which assumed a regality, (rājasika) with periodical *vabhavas* and *utsavas* under the patronage of almost all the rulers till 18th century A.D.

Having said all this, it must still be stated that the early spread of Buddhism and Jainism during the Mauryan periods pushed to the background the brāhmanical cults in the South for a while. They were not appearing openly on a large scale so as to leave any remarkable traces in the form of grand architectural and iconographic creations in Andhra and Tamilnadu, though Gudimallam is the lone example which has got to be regarded as a solid proof for the existence of early *Śaiva* temples in the South. It might also be noted that this place is somewhat remote from the active influencing zones of Buddhism during this period.

After the Gudimallam experience, let us examine some other ancient and sacred *Śiva-sthānas* in the South. The first one that comes to my mind is Kalahasti, closer to Gudimallam and the second one is Chidambaram. These two places possess *Vāyu* and *Ākāśaliṅgas* respectively[15]

according to legend and literature. The other three ancient sthānas are Aruṇāchalēśvara at Tiruvannamalai noted for Agni-*liṅga*, Kāñchīpuram[20] prithvi-*liṅga*; and Jambukēśvara (Tiruvanaikkaval), for *Āpa-liṅga*. These five great *kshetras* were famous as *pañchabhūta-kshetras*, a concept arising out of the *Sadāśiva-tattva*. Śrī Kāḷahastī, Chidambaram and Tiruvaṇṇāmalai connect the *Śiva-sthala* with the hills and forests and in all these cases the earliest nature of worship appears to be, in many aspects, closer to what we have archaeologically recovered at the earliest phase of Gudimallam. The liṅga which made its appearance under the Jambu tree at Tiruvanaikka was worshipped by a white elephant. We are told that this animal bathed the lord bringing water in its trunk from the river, while a spider span a web in order to prevent leaves falling on it. These three, that is the insect, reptile and animal, have ultimately given up their lives demonstrating devotion to the lord and won salvation. So the God is of all. At Śrī Kālahasti also the main *liṅga* is a *svayambhū* type (natural pebble), and as the legend has it, the *Śrī* (spider), *Kāḷa* (snake), and *Hastī* (Elephant), worshipped in their own way the *Śiva-liṅga* which confirms its hypaethral nature amidst forest-hilly tract. Again the tribal Hunter Tinna's worship of Śiva involving the offer of raw flesh to God, his great devotion to the deity displayed by plucking out his own eyes to graft them on the Lord's eyes which were bleeding, implying thereby, a *mukha-liṅga*[21] in the open. Tinna, the great devotee, became Kannappa Nayanār. The present ecology around Kāḷahasti is not very much different from that of the Chōḷa period when a larger configuration of temples had cropped up and practically the jungle had been cut off. But its hoary past and sacreditness was sung alike by various Tamil writers, the earliest being Nakkeerar, apart from Sambandar, Appar, Manikkavazagar, Sundaramūrti Nayanar, besides the great Ādi Śaṅkara who explicitly narrates the Kannappa legend in his Śivānandalaharī; not to speak of the abundant *purāṇic* citations as in the Skanda, Śiva and Liṅga *purāṇas*.

Similarly Chidambaram, with its great Chitsabha, where Śiva is worshipped in his *Ākāśa* form has revealed some reliable and surer links with Patañjali, the *Yogasūtrakāra* of the second century B.C. Though structurally the temple cannot be pushed to a date earlier than that of the Imperial Chōḷas, the inscriptional references take us to the seventh-eighth centuary A.D. and the literature to Patañchali's time. It is true that many Patañlali's and Vyāghrapāds were mixed up in early literature and specific associations and periods cannot be worked out firmly. Late B.G.L. Swamy[22] who made a rationalised study of the accounts on Chidambaram and Naṭarāja feels that the tilla at Perumbarrappuliyur served as a *Naishthika-sthāna*, "never meant to be a temple that is, a *mūlasthāna* or *garbhagriha*, in the technical sense". The *Chidambara-rahasya*, the mistery or secret, has a specific connotation. Behind the *sanctum sanctorum* where the Naṭarāja image exists there is a cell which is said to contain a body of a *Yogi* in an eternal *samādi*[23] state which is now walled up. According to N. Ramesan an *eka-mukhaliṅga* exists here[24] standing for *Īśāna*. The *chitsabhā* signified worship of Śiva in the Ākāśa form, beyond the ken even of the Yogis, (*Yoginām apyagocharaṁ*). Even at Tiruvanaikka sometime ago the Paramaguru Śrī Śankarāchārya, Śrīmān Chandraśekhara Sarasvatī Svāmi of Kāñchī found a *chaturmukha liṅga* of the Chōḷa period. It resembles the one at Kāḷahastī which is, however, within a cave south of the main temple on the slopes of the Kannappa hill.[25]

It appears to be almost certain that an early wave of *pāśupata Śaivism*[62] spread to the south during the second century B.C., after a spell of Aśoka's Buddhism, and, subsequently, Lakulīśa and his apostolic descendants proselytized the *Vaīdīka Pāśupatism* on a grand scale. This resulted in the creation of a wide variety of *vyaktāvyakta* rūpas of Śiva Mahādeva. Gudimallam Rudra-*Liṅga* is thus an eye opener and points to the existence of early *brāhmaṇical* vestiges alike, during the Mauryan and post-Mauryan

times in South India, as in the northern parts of the country. A probe like the one conducted at Gudimallam in any of the above places might yield rich and reliable archaeological data on the antiquity of Śaivism. But alas! how many among the present day temple trusts in the South would agree for such a scientific examination into the House of their Living God? But it is highly significant that in all the five *Pañcha bhūta Kshetras* discussed above, a *mukha-liṅga* is associated, although, they were later installations, going with the elaborate Chōḷa structures. But the very consecration of *Mukhaliṅgās*, their esoterism, has Vedic origins. Yet John Irwin in a private communication to me (dated 24th August, 1982) has said "Where I radically disagree is in your categorisation of the Gudimallam image as 'anthropomorphism'. In my context, it is essentially 'aniconic', the anthropomorphic element being very secondary in the *Yajamāna*, though belonging to a time, of course, when anthropomorphism in worship was just beginning somewhat unevenly, in different parts of India. But I am, nonetheless, grateful for the archaeological data you present, which is important". We have clearly demonstrated by this anlytical study of the physical features and attributes that the *Rudra-Yajamāna* carved on the frontal facets of the *liṅga* imbibed the Vedic and proto-*Purānic* concepts and if the subsequent cult marks vividly detailed in the following paragraphs have any meaning even among the attendent minor gods and semi divine forms, a distinction had already come to stay in respect of the brāhmanical Gods. But the basic phenomenon that should be borne in mind while prosecuting the studies on Indian art history and iconography, more so of the southern region, is that "Vedic thoughts and trends have not ceased to be by the end of the Vedic period,"[27] but continued to live in the society and exercised tremondous influence in moulding the cultural life right upto the present day.

Be that as it may, H. Sarkar[28] has recently expressed the view that "the date of Gudimallam *Liṅga* may be

placed after Nagarjunakonda or Chejerla and its dating to the fourth century A.D. fits in well with all the available evidence — be it historical, artistic or archaeological." This late dating was suggested by D.R. Bhandarkar[29] long ago. I have dealt with in greater detail about the antiquity of Śaivism in South India, after taking full stock of the entire gamut of evidences from all parts of India — historical, artistic, architectural or archaeological in the preceding chapters of my work published in 1982. It appears Sarkar skipped over the art-historical data examined by us in these chapters and merely narrated the known data in the first two pages. His threefold division of the *liṅga* is not applicable to the Gudimallam example, much less, this unique evidence be judged from the early-medieval concepts[30] of *liṅga-pītha* or *apasmārapurusha* etc. (see below such forms are freshly studied).

Simillarly the compound expression 'Rudra-Śiva' was a creation of R.G. Bhandarkar[31] and such a form was no where met with nor found mentioned in the Vedic texts. Instead the correct word is '*Bhava-Śarva*'. There should be no doubt that the form of the God depicted on the frontal facet of the *liṅga* is Rgvedic "*Rudra-Yajamāna*" not the *purānic* Śiva. Indeed we named the form as proto-Śiva[32] basing on a thorough study of several factors such as early literary and philosophic concepts, epigraphic- numismatic correlations, besides the art style, inscriptions and other archaeological associates. The use of sand stone as well as local brownish slate for the "*liṅga-pīṭha-Vedika*" set up, as against the tradition of extensive use of soft greenish lime stone medium for sculptural arts (palnad) prior to the Christian era is a point raised by Sarkar. May it be noted that granite as a material for inscriptions, architectural members and sculptural art was well utilised during the Mauryan phase at the *mahāchaitya* of Dhaṁñakaḍa[33] and certainly the later dynasties like the Pallava have merely revived the use of such hard stones, available in plenty in the Tondaimaṇḍalam area. Not only granite but a local

variety of sandstone was also used for making an inscribed Aśokan column at Amaravati. The massive granite relic containers at Bhattiprolu were not merely inscribed but also given the typical Mauryan polish and finish on them. There is no doubt about the early Mauryan beginning for the sculptural art on hard stones in coastal Andhra and the Gudimallam evidence is uniqne in respect of early Śaiva vestiges in the whole country. *Argumentum et absentia* without further planned work in this direction will not lead us anywhere.

However, with spread of Mahāyan Buddhism from the Krishna-Guntur tract the cult objects prepared out of limestond were virtually transported to Karnataka and Tondaimaṇḍalam. That is why we see at the Buddhist sites of Sannati, Banavāsi, Hampi etc. in Karnataka, and Kāñchī and Kaveripumpattinam in Tamilnadu, wherein these objects were found in the 2nd-3re centuty A.D. levels.

As at Bharhut, Bodh Gaya and Sanchi, a locally available stone from *Tirupati Koṇḍalu* was used at Gudimallam to carve the unique form of Vedic *Rudra Yajamāna* on an upright *Liṅga* surrounded by a closely set *Vedikā.* The stone (reddish igneous rock) colour also appears to be a selection based on Vedic prescriptions for *Rudra* was of tawny brown colour, hence *Aruṇāya, Tāmrāya* etc.

Sarkar[34] further justifies a late date expressing certain doubts on the validity of the sequence worked out by me on the basis of the stratigraphy within the *garbha-gṛiha* vis-a-vis, the trial trench-A outside. No doubt the area dug was too limited for broader sequential comparison and chronological fixations. Even if we ignore, for a moment, the stratum obtained from Trench-A, since that section was not published[35] in my work, the stratigraphy obtained from the *Garbha-Griha* dig is explicitly clear. (Fig. 1) I admit that some printing devils have crept into my work and as rightly pointed out by Sarkar the dating of layer-5 should be corrected to read as third-fourth century B.C.

From the top of this layer, the first working level is noted. After levelling, the ground was prepared. The *Vāstumaṇḍala*[46] was in an enclosure, a *Chatvāra* "a fenced off square without any kind of building on it." This is what we have encountered on the layer-5. The first set of stones laid were flat irregular slab pieces (anvils) three on each side of the square rail. The short uprights were placed on the bases and this method of foundation is like the "Under-Pinning stone technique" (PL. 2) as known from the Aśokan free-standing pillars, stone and wooden palisades and also the *stūpa* rails of early Mauryan[47] and Post-Mauryan period. There is no other foundation pit here in this phase-1, but in Phase-2 an apsidal brick temple was raised the foundation of which can be clearly seen cutting through the layers-3,4 and 5 at the working level-3, dated to the 1st-3rd cent. A.D. There is no doubt that the evidences of the earliest working levels (1 and 2) and floor-1, which are distinctly seen in the *Garbha-Gṛiha* trench as the remarkably clear photo-illustrations nos. 9 to 14 of my work reveal. In fact, no need arose to mark the layers with the help of a knife as they were so obvious by distinct colour and compositional factors. The working levels and floor were neatly levelled and laid by the first authors of the shrine itself. Attention of the reader is drawn to my illustrations photo-11 and 12, besides, the drawings Figs. 4 to 6.

Truly my "exploratory Survey or Study" was indeed in the close vicinity of the monument[48] after an additional area was acquired by the Archaedogical Survey behind the *prākāra* of this famous temple complex. But certainly the limited excavation within the *Garbha-Gṛiha* was no doubt "small, but well-schemed problem oriented digging." We have demonstrated[49] fully "how methodical application of archaeological field techniques would unravel not only certain refreshingly new evidences, but help in the proper interpretation of the impregnant *Vedic-Purāṇic* and *Āgamic* concepts governing the origin and evolution of a deity, its house and ritual", from this dig within a live temple of

great historical importance. Interpretations should not be based on mere assumptions arising out of an incomplete study of a carefully documented and meticulously recorded archaeological facts from the excavation, however, small its nature and scope be.[40] In this case any excavator would have loved to dig more exhaustively, and deeply rather, exposing fully the layers five and even six, dismantling the temple; but that was not possible as the shrine is a live one and the villagers are highly tradition bound. Even otherwise the date obtained and the stratigraphical contexts clearly point to 3rd cen. B.C. date for the beginning of the hypaethral *Savedika-liṅga-pīṭha* set-up. There is urgent need to realise this and work upon the antiquity and spread of Śaivism in South India- Mere art-historic, stylistic approach basing on the study of art forms and architectural norms will not provide a sound basis for chronological fixations. Careful researches, as conducted by us, at Gudimallam revealed specific archaeological facts admirably complimenting the textual sources. Such studies in the architectural-archaeology are the need of the hour. I have no hesitation to say that the limited excavation within the *garbha-griha* of the Gudimallam temple is the first attempt of its kind and deserves to be followed up at other great temples, the hoary past of which has remained unchecked. To summerise, the stratigraphical evidence clearly points to the date suggested by us. It runs counter to the present day art-history based conclusions which often display deliberate indifference to the stratigraphic evidence which cannot lie or flatter.

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31. R.K. Siddhanta Shastre, *Śaivism Through the Ages*, (New Delhi, 1974), p. 23. Dr. N. Venkataramanaya infact has titled his book *Rudra-Ṣiva* (Madras, 1941) though the work is a classic by itself.

32. I.K. Sarma, *op. cit.*, (1982), pp. 58-59.

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35. The full illustrated report "Śiva Temple of Gudimallam — A probe into its origins", is awaiting publication in *Ancient India*, Bulletin of the Archaeological Survey of India since 1980. I have dealt on this more elaborately with all the illustrations.

36. Stella Kramrich, *The Hindu Temple*, I, Calcutta, 1946), p. 59.

37. S.P. Gupta, *The Roots of Indian Art*, (New Delhi, 1980), pp. 44-46.

38. I.K. Sarma, *op. cit.*, pp. 40-41.

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40. Queueing up with H. Sarkar, Karl J. Khandalvala recently quipped in the pages of *Lalkit Kala*, no. 22 (New Delhi, 1985, pp. 73-74), without referring to me by name, "Can the recent excavations be regarded as throwing any light on the date of the sculptured *Liṅga*?" But I am glad and grateful to Karl Khandalvalji, who wrote to me again that he had not read my work, (*The Development of Early Śaiva art and Architecture*, (New Delhi, 1982), Ch. V, pp. 39-68) and his views are based on a visit to the site "long long ago and much before your excavations. I had felt on grounds of style that it was C. 4th century A.D. But stylistic analysis is not fool-proof, I agree". (Personal communication dated 12.8.36)

CHAPTER III

CERTAIN UNIQUE GANAS AND GUHYAS: ANTIQUITY OF BRAHMANICAL CULTS

Associated with the *Pañchabhūtas*, and vested with both benevolent and malevolent powers, are some of the godly creatures called *Yakshas* and *Yakshis*, their *gaṇas* and *guhyas*. In Indian art, mostly of Buddhist affiliation, a plethora of such divine and mythical forms were known right from Mauryan times. Here we would highlight a few significant[1] examples from some recently excavated sites in South India, datable to the pre Christian eras and evaluate certain new features noticed on the sculptural depictions from the north.

1. *Gudimallam Guhya*: (PLS. 4. A,B,C)

As a result of the stratigraphical probe within the *garbha-griha*, we could expose the buried figure of a seated dwarf (*guhya*), over the frontal facet of the facetted *Liṅga*, within the Paraśurāmeśvara temple, at Gudimallam. This figure, seated on kness, covering the top of the *brahmabhāga* of the Rudra-*Liṅga* whose total height measures 1.68 m. On the shoulders of this *guhya* stands firmly planted a full-bodied Agni-Rudra (PL.3), 80 cm high, shown as if emerging out of a *yūpa*. The figure is awe-inspiring and reveals splendorous movement, but the goblin-like *devayāna* below is certainly disinclined to carry the mightly God. His ruffled brow, tight-teethed grim-face, cheeks, nostril folds and the eyes impart a scouling look. His body is shrunken,

palms resting on the hips due to the superload. The ears are pointed and leaf-shaped. The ear lobes are elongated by conical drops studded with pearls or precious stones. He has *Kanṭhamālā* made up of fine strings with a long barrel-shapped pendant at the centre, set between two *rudrāksha* beads which spanned the chest. He wears simple circular wristlets and armlets (*kankaṇās*). The bi-partitioned navel and the lower garment fairly above the knees tied by the *mekhalā* string below the navel are characteristic. The *vastra* folds outwardly, its double line tassels fall on the ground between the legs. His head-gear is curious and embellished with a bunch of flowers and stalks tied to a crest composed of two sun-flowers back-to-back. This feature, along with the erect ears resembling those of a *Śaśa* (hare), symbolised alertness and swift movement, apart from the arboreal nature of the *Gaṇa*. By far the most outstanding feature, not visualised anywhere in the realm of early Indian art, lies in the leg terminals, which resemble those of the merman, a *mīnavāji* or *mātanga nakra*. (PL. 4C). The other important characteristic is a sharp vertical incised forehead mark[2] (*tilaka*), above the knot between the eye-brows. Here the Rudra mounted on the *Guhya* represents the Vedic *sarvabhūtādamana* aspect of Vāmadeva associated with the water (*āpaḥ*). That this *guhya* is undoubtedly a *pātāla-gaṇa* aligned to the *Vishṇu-kamalōdhara* or *Nārāyaṇa*.

2. *A Stūpa slab from Dhulikatta*: (PL. 8B)

An interesting *āyakapaṭa* slab of limestone was reported from the excavations at the *stūpa* in the village of Vatakapur, a hamlet near the fortified early historical habitation called Dhulikatta. The *stūpa* is a remarkable example of Hīnāyāna affiliation and was found to possess sculptures encased over the *aṇḍa* and *āyakas*. The earliest phase of the *stūpa* dates back to mid-third century B.C. The extant height of the drum is reported to be of two metres while the *aṇḍa* is preserved to a height of five metres and crowned by a *harmikā* and *chhatras*. As many as 47-carved slabs were

found encased along the periphery of the drum. On one such limestone slab covering the eastern *Āyaka* platform, a *gaṇa* holds up the base of a carved pillar like the goblins of the Pitalkhora[3] cave no. III, as well as the Sāñchi *toraṇa* examples (western). But this stumpy dwarf reveals certain unique and early characteristics not met with anywhere else. The short comb-like trimmed hair above the forehead, his awful awe-inspiring eyes, (eye balls coming out), snub nose and burly cheeks, small chin and thick wide lips, leaf-shaped out-sized ears with distended ear-lobes, similar in style to Gudimallam *guhya* rested on the shoulder and composed of a cluster of pearls or precious beads. The rounded *pādas* with well marked elephant-toes have no parallel in Indian art. The displayed folds of the broad piece of lower cloth, covering the nudity (*Kaupīna*) with no visible ornamental girdle string emphasizes his tribal character. The most conspicuous feature is the cult mark on the forehead an *ūrdhva-tripundraka* which is like the forehead mark of the *Vaishṇavite vaḍa kalai*,[4] i.e. northern sect, among the Śrīvaishṇavas. This forehead-mark incised between the eye-brows consists of two side lines, the tops flaring outward with the central vertical line corresponding to the ridge of the nose, *nāsikāgra*. This slab adorns the east facing *āyakapaṭa*. We might take this *gaṇa* with the elephant leg to be an *aīrāvata*, the *vāhana* of Indra, regent of the East. There is no doubt that this *stūpa* slab belongs to the second century B.C. on the basic of an inscription apart from the stylistic factors.

3. *A Limestone Coping* (*Ushṇīsha*) *from Amarāvatī Mahāchaītya*: *District Guntur*; *Andhra Pradesh*: (PLs. 5A)

A limestone coping measuring 3.35 m. long, 66 cm. wide and 19 cm. thick, datable to the first century B.C.[5] has given us a rare sculptural theme of *mālāvāhakas* carrying the lotus rizome. To begin with, from the extreme right, the first standing figure has an elephant face and fan-shaped ears, a short statured stumpy physique with a prominent paunch, and the navel in the shape of a willow-

leaf, a characteristic obtained in some early dwarf figures from Amarāvatī itself. The tassels of the *dhoti* above the knees are held up between the thighs. A stringed *mālā* with a heavy *ghaṭa*-shaped central pendent rests over the paunch. The figure wears prominent wristlets. The stumpy garland is borne over the back, the right hand is upraised somewhat, whereas the corresponding left palm is twisted and held at the hip, due to the superlead. The next figure is an obese female dwarf (PL. 5B) shown frontally with a similar lower garment, heavy breasts, and the facial features partly mutilated. She bares the heavy garland on the back across the shoulders.

The third figure (PL. 5C) is extremely interesting and important. He is a male dwarf walking sideways to the right, the heavy garland being held up in both the hands. He has certain distinct features, like moustache, wrinkled brow and a close fitting cap, a *vāmakirīṭi*, two twigs emerging out of it, one above the forehead and the other at the rear. Possibly a number of such *śikhās* might be there, besides the *nilōtpala*. He wears a closestriped nicker. The fourth figure (PL. 5D), is again a full-bodied female facing left. Seated at ease on the pericarp of the lotus, she wears a striped drawer, adorns a star-shaped jewel on the forehead, *makuṭamaṇi,* its lace securing the bi-partitioned hair-do (*dhammilla*) which is finely combed. She has bulging breasts, wide eyes, heavy anklets, multiple wristlets, a beaded *mālā* and jewel-studded ear lobes. The figure is undoubtedly Lakshmī, like the Bhārhut and Śañchī ones and datable alike, to early centuries B.C. What is of more significance is the carving of an *ulūka,* (owl) the *vāhana* of Lakshmī[6] at the sectional face of the slab.

The first *gaṇa* is a true representation of *Gajānana* being the very first in the sequence, he is a *Gaṇādhipa.* The next female figure obviously stands for *Gaṇēśaṇi*[7] his consort. Although evidence is meagre in respect of the consort of Gaṇēśa in early iconography attention might be drawn to some rare examples, like the ones from Rairh,[8]

Mathura[9] and Bhumara.[10] The nearest and an early Kushan find is reported from Chandraketugarh.[11] Here he is two-handed, supports his consort on the lap. The third figue is that of Dhanada, i.e. Kubera who is *Lokapāla*, the regent of the North and also a *guhyapati*.[12] Kubera standing as an attendant of Lakshmī is not uncommon in early Indian art. The Lakshmī here is shown drawing out a *mālā* from the mouth of a *makara* which again is the *vāhana* of the goddess. Hence *makara-Lakshmī*. In some later passages[13] of the Mahābhārata, Lakshmī is stated to be the consort of Kubera. But the *Śrī* here, with all her *lakshṇās* and *lañchanas*, is performing the task rather unbecomingly of her character and prowess. S. Paranivatane described a *Vāhalkaḍa* or *frontispiece* from Kantakachetinga[14] *Stūpa* at Mihintale, district Kandy, Śrīlanka wherein an elephant faced two handed seated *Gaṇa* is shown amidst the others as a *Vāhaka*. This is dated to the second ecntury A.D. and regarded as "undoubtedly a prototype of the classical Gaṇēśa."

In the Hīnayāna Buddhism certain brāhmanical deities were shown as acolytes of the Buddha. Even in far-away Central and North-west China we find certain brahmanical deities depicted in the rock art as well as paintings. At Yunkang (Province Shanxi) Cave no. 8 dated to 465-494 A.D., besides Yakshas and Gandharvas, Mahēśvara on Bull and Kumāra on peacock were carved in reliefs flanking the main arched entrance of the cave.

Both the deities are interesting examples and stand a good comparison to the Gupta-Vākāṭaka, early Pallava-Chālukya depictions.

The Mahēśvara (PL. 6A), is shown seated at ease on a recumbant bull, He is three-headed (*Triśirsha* or Trivaktra), and eight-handed. The right one in *vitarka mudra*, while the left is at *kaṭi*. The other three hands on the right side carry weaponry like *mūsala*, bow and *pāśa*, the corresponding left ones are mutilated. A similar three-

headed but six-armed seated Śiva on bull mount deserves to be stated here. This depiction is on a painted mural over the east facing rear wall of the cella in cave No. 285, at Dunhuang in Gansu Province of China dated to 536-538 A.D. At the lower region of the central figure of Śiva, on the right is a four-handed seated Kārtikeya. The latter holds in the upper right hand a spear (*Vēl*), in the left a bunch of grapes; in the lower right a short *triśula* or *Śaktī* while corresponding lower left a flower bud close to the navel. To the left of Śiva is a two-handed Vināyaka with uprised trunk. He holds a *Vajra* in the left hand and in the right a fruit, the animal head has a *Śikha* on top and nimbus at the rear. Both Vināyaka and Kārtikeya are seated in *ardhaparyankāsana* and possess no *yajñopavita*. The goddess is, howeves, absent in all these cases.

Kumāradeva or Kārtikeya (PL. 6B) on the west side of the door-way of the Yunkang cave (nearly a century older to Gansu) is, however, a Shaḍānana (six-headed the sixth one at the rear), youthful with well combed curly hairdo. He is seated on Mayūra (*mayūra prishṭhā Śraya*). He is six-handed, the main right hand on the knee with a pointed finger (*tarśani*), while the left holds the cock (*Kukkuṭa lāñchana*) nearer to the chest. The left side hands hold *musala*, and bow, the corresponding right ones *pāśa* and quiver. The peacock is very natural with large plumes and eating a fruit.

Both Śiva and Kārtikeya of the Yunkang cave are gaurded by a *Triśūlin* Yaksha in the lower register recalling such depictions at the Udayagirī (Orissa)[15] and early Pallava cave temples of Tamilnadu. The flying *Gandharvas* on top with the *vaikakshakas* are remarkably Indian in stance. In all these cases, the brāhmanical deities were given a subordinate status to the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.[16] Lokesh Chandra[17] says that the "acculturation of Śiva into the Buddhist tradition had taken place in South India". Coastal Āndhradēśa and Kāñchī in Tamilnadu, in particular, played a crucial role in the development of

not only certain Buddhist cults but contributed a spiritually vibrant syncreticism of Buddhist and Brahmnical cults, much earlier. The flourishing maritime trade contacts with China and nearer countries of the east during the time of the Han dynasty from mid-second century B.C. For that matter Kāñchī, is *oḍḍyāṇam* girdle (*Maṇimekhala*) a vibrant religious centre of classical India, economically affluent right from the times of Patañjali. But as the present evidence goes the depictions on the Amaravati coping are the earliest known examples and perhaps inspired the Ceylonese Buddhists and subsequently travelled to China also along with the spread of Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna sects from coastal Āndhra and Toṇḍoimaṇḍalam. What is intriguing is however, that the Chinese depictions of Brāhmanical deities are anterior to the Rock carvings of the Early Pallavas as well as the earliest known Chālukyan caves of Karnataka. But there is no doubt that in the Chinese depictions, an admixure of the Gupta-Vākaṭaka and Pallava traits are evident.

4. *Some Other Rare Examples in Indian Art:*

This study will be incomplete without considering certain comparable examples from other regions. The foremost that comes to my notice recently is the Bharhut[18] railing in Indian Museum, Calcutta. Two examples of *Gaṇas* are presented here. The first example is a male *Gaṇa*, only the bust part, within the lotus pericarp, indicating its emergence from the blossoming lotus. This grotesque *gaṇa* possessed[19] long asinine ears, lower part distended due to heavey spiral lobes similar to Gudimallam and Dhulikatta *gaṇas*. The most distinct feature is the forehead mark, an *ūrdhva puṇḍraka* incised in double vertical line in between the eye-knot and touching the *bindu*.

Another example of a *Guhya*, like the Gudimallam one, is best illustrated over a vertical shaft of the Bharhut rail (no. 106). Here the crouching stumpy semi-human dwarf is bent on knees, both his hands touching the ground, and

shrunken due to the super-load of the standing "*Kupira Yaksha*" over the shoulders (PL. 7). A closer view of this Bhārāvāhaka revealed certain characteristics. He has elephant like ears, (PL. 8A) oblique long eyes, a broad chin, a stumpy long nose and bi-partitioned combed hair. The forehead, *pālabhāga*, has incised *triangulaka* horizontal marks topped by a *chandrakala*, i.e. crescent with a bindu in its curve corresponding to the central line of the bi-partitioned hairdo. The fan-shaped ears in this example as that of the Gaṇēśa form the Amaravati coping, the elephant toes of the Dhulikatta *Gaṇa* display commonness in their origin, perhaps from the Aīrāvata, the *Vāhana* of the regent of the East, the Vedic Indra. The *eka-puṇḍra* on the forehead of the Bharhut *Gaṇa* within the lotus medallion as well as over the Gudimallam *guhya*, along with the merman leg feature emphasizes their association and origin from *Pātāla*. Vedic Rudra is described as the overlord of Goblins, *Bhūtānāmadhipatiḥ*, (Rg. I. 114. 6), while in the *Purāṇas*, Yakshas were reganded as the offsprings of the *Gaṇas* of Mahādeva. (*Vāyu*. Ch. i. P. 106). The *bhūtas* and others were stated to be born out of the sweat of Śiva. The *ūrdhva-tri-puṇḍraka* of Dhulikatta *Guhya* and the elephant feet connect the *Guhya* to Indra or Viṣṇu. The *patraka* ears are distinct from *Śankhakarṇas*. These can be clearly contrasted between Gudimallam-Dhulikatta examples on the other. The *tri-angulaka* mark on the forehead of the Bharhut caryatid, along with the *chandrakalā*, aligns him to the *Śaiva* cult. It appears then that Buddhists right from very early times, in their eagerness to make Buddha the greatnst among the Gods, followed the Vedic and brāhmanical concepts, the Mahāpurusha and *Sadāśiva-tattvas*, and conceived Buddhist divinitiesas superior to the Vedic and brāhmaṇical Gods and demi-Gods. In the second-third century inscriptions from South (Nagarjunakonda), we get clearly this deification of the Buddha as honoured by the king of Gods (*devarāja-sakata*), and absorbed by the best[20] of *dhātus* (*Dhātuvara parigahita*) etc.

It is from the 10th or 11th century onwards that the *Ūrdhva-puṇḍraka*, both single or three (*eka* or *tri-puṇḍraka*), becomes an exclusive *Vaishṇavitic* cult-mark and sub-sects grew based on the manner and composition of this symbol. Whereas, the *anguḷaka* (*traya* or *pañchānguḷaka*) horizontal marks on the forehead signified a *Śaiva* or more commonly *smārta* from the times of Ādi Śaṅkara.

Curiously *Śankha-karṇa* Yaksha is found among the ten *kshetrapālaka* images (*utsava-mūrtis*) taken in procession before the regular *Vaibhavotsava* of lord *Śrī Ranganātha* at the famous Śrī Rangam Temple. These Yakshas were assigned specific places in the *Tiruvuṇṇāḷi-pradakshiṇa* surrounding the circular sanctum, according to *Pañcharātra Āgama Vidhī*.[21] This ritual might have a hoary past and originated from the centres of *Uttarāpatha* like Mathura and Ahichchatra.

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3. M.N. Deshpande, "The Rock cut Caves of Pitalkhora", *Ancient India*, no. 15, p. 73, PL. XLIX.

4. J. Dubreil and A.C. Martin, *Op. cit.*, (1978), p. 58, fig. 16.

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6. Ulūka is shown as the *Vāhana* of *Lakshmī* even now during *Pūja* days in Bengal although in medieval period *Ulūka* became a diagnostic vehicle of Chāmuṇḍa in North India.

7. 'The correct name would be Vaīnāyaki or Vināyaka, P.K. Agrawala, *Goddess Vināyaki, The Female Gaṇēśa,* (Varansi, 1978), pp. 1-3.

8. This is a terracotta plaque from excavations: K.N. Puri, *Excavations at Rairh,* p. 29, PL. XIV, fig. 1.

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18. My friend Shri M.U. Qureshi, Photographer Gr. I, Nagpur has subsequently noted many more curious example of this type. I am thankful to him.

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CHAPTER IV

CHATURMUKHA LINGA AND NANDI FROM AMARAVATI AND LAKULISA PASUPATA CULT IN SOUTH INDIA: (PLS. 9 and 10)

A tiny *mukhaliṅga* of greenish palnad limestone, seven cm. high and six cm. maximum width, was reported from 'Koṭa-dibba', south-east of the present Amarēśvara temple.[1] This solitary example, (PL. 9) distinctly of the later Sātavāhana times, is the only known example of its kind in the Peninsular India and points out clearly to the existence of a tradition of personal worship of an *Ishṭa-Liṅga* by a *Vaidika Pāśupata-Śaiva,* although during this period the inhabitants and the *Sthāna* around the Dharanikota-Amaravati were overwhelmed by Buddhist culture and arts. Another startling discovery (1980) is a life-size Nandī, 1.30 m. high, realistic and dignified (PL. 10) which should have been originally placed before a lofty temple of Śiva where such an imposing bull stood at its threshold for the Vṛishabha is *daiva-vīkshaṇa-tatparaḥ*. *Vṛishabha* is also an attributive epithet of several Vedic divinities, including Rudra, but it came to denote Śiva during this period. In fact Śiva is called Nandīśvara or *Nandana,* literally four-faced. These two objects, coming as they are from Amaravati clearly demonstrate the prevalence of both private and public worship of Śiva during the Sātavāhana times. A century later in the Ikshvāku temples unearthed at Nagarjunakonda[2] we get a limestone reclining Nandī of a smaller size, juxtaposed to the *Liṅga* at the *ardha-maṇḍapa,*

obtaining a character of routine placement of the cult thus deities in miniature form.

Like the *Pañchabhūta Kshetras* of the Lower *Draviḍadēśa*, the *Pañchārāma Kshetras*[3] of *Āndhradēsa* (*Amarārāma*-Amarāvati; *Bhimārāma*-Samalkota Bhimavara, *Drākshārāma* East Godavari: *Kshīrārāma*-Palakollu: *Ādikēśavara*-Chebrolu); have Vedic origins and mutation.

We have earlier noticed at Gudimallam that the Vedic, Rudra-Yajamāna, over the tall *Liṅga* imbibed certain *lakshṇās* or *MahāSadāŚiva.* The *Pañchabhūta* concept is closely linked to this *Sadā-Śiva tattva* in South India. Even after the anthropomorphic creations of the great God came into being, certain purely Vedic concepts remained unsullied and divine forms were created in this part of the country even as late as the 11th century A.D. although a plethora of Gods and Godesses began to enthrall the public in elaborate temples. We might state some details of this unique *Liṅga* before analysing some later archaeological evidences of this category.

Esoterism of the Mukhaliṅga:

Sadyojātamantras were regarded as *bijāmantras* by the *Pāśupata Śaivas* (*Nārāyaṇopanishad*: *Taittiriya Āraṇyaka* X, 43-47). The five faces represented Tatpurusha, Aghora, Vāmadeva, Sadyojāta, and Īśāna collectively known as *Pañcha-brahma* (*Pañchabrahmopanishad; yajurveda*), The iconography (*svarūpas*) of the *Sadyojātādi mantras* is found clearly reflected in Vishṇudarmottara[4] a work dated to sixth century A.D. (*Śambhor-vadana-pañchakam*). The invocations to each of the *mukha* or face of Mahādeva, their orientation towards the cardinal directions and sky and the esoteric significance were admirably defined by Sāyaṇācharya[5] (14th century A.D), the *Vedabhāshyakṛita dhīman*, the most authentic and greatest commentator of the Vedas. In the later *āgamas* this *Śivatattva* is explained among the *dvādaśarudrārādhana*, (*Aparajitapariprichcha)*, and the five

faces are likened to an arrow (*Śarānanaṁ*: Karaṇāgama), and regarded as the five natural elements.[6]

1. *The East Face*: (PL.9A)

Tatpurusha, represented the Air, the *mantra* reads "*tatpurushāya vidmahe Mahādevāya dhīmahe, tanno rudra-prachodayāt*". The attributes are Mahādeva and Rudra. The face reveals open eyes, bulging cornes round eye-balls, smiling countenance, long distended ear-lobes, right ear *ghaṭa-kuṇḍala*, left ear with a cluster of pearls. The hair is arranged in a cup-shaped *jaṭā-makuṭa* decorated with lotus buds.

2. *The South Face*: (PL. 9B)

Agni represented the *Aghora* aspect with an open mouth, *dakshiṇam-vikaṭam mukhaṁ*. The *mantra* reads: "*Aghōrebhyō-tha ghōre-bhyo — Ahōra-ghoratarēbhyaḥ Sarvataḥ sarva sarve-bhyō namaste astu Rudra-rūpebhyaḥ*',

3. *The West Face*: (PL. 9C)

This is *Sadyojāta* or *Nandīvaktra*, standing for earth, the thick lips gently parting in smile (*Mandahāsa*). The head-dress appears to be *Karaṇḍa-makuṭa* with the crescent atop (*bālendu-Kṛita-Śēkhara*).

Mantra:

> "*Sadyojātaṁ prapadyāmi sadyojātāya vai-namaḥ bhave-bhave n-atibhave bhajasvamām bhavodbhavāya namāḥ*"

4. *The North Face*: (PL. 9D)

Vāmadeva stands for water and immediate left of Mahādeva. This is the most attractive, serene and beautiful of all, a women's delight. The *kapardi-jaṭās* and slightly down case eyes make him a *Umā-vaktra*.

Mantra:

> "*Vāmadevāya namō jyēshṭhāya namaḥ*
> *Śrēshṛhaya namō Rudrāya namaḥ Kālāya namaḥ*

Kalavikaraṇāya namō balavikaraṇāya namō balapramathanāya namaḥ
Sarvabhūta damanāya namō manōnmanāya namaḥ"

5. *The Top Face*:

Is'āna or SadāŚiva, formless and directed to the sky.

Mantra:

"Īśānaḥ sarvavidyānāṁ Īśvaraḥ sarvabhūtānāṁ
Brahmādhipati- brahmaṇōdhipati-Brahmā śivo mā astu Sadā-śivom"

Īśāna here is *Sarva Vidyānāṁ Īśvaraḥ*, supreme lord of all learning. *Sarva bhūtānāṁ Īśvaraḥ*, lord of all animals.

There is no third eye on any of the faces. The underside is roughly dressed and indicates its placement into a slot over a pedstal of stone or wood. The top is worn out and shows a central depression caused due to the trickling of water which then clearly points to the fact the *Liṅga* was under regular worship involving *nityābhisheka.* The *mukha Liṅga* bears unmistakable Sātavāhana characteristics. The faces are shown upto the neck parts only. In the *Āgamas*, which are later compositions, three eyes are stated forall the faces except thatof Vāmadeva (*trilochanaṁ-Sarvāni, Vāmadevaṁdvilochanaṁ*), and the figure is upto the bust (*stanasūtra*), including the *bhujaskandha.*

The Amarāvatī Mukhaliṅga is thus the earlies known specimen of a pre-*āgamic* period and has far reaching implications. We have known that the *liṅga* of Gudimallam which is older by three centuries revealed the characteristics of *Tatpurusha*, *Vāmadeva* and *Īśāna* but not those of *Aghora* and *Sadyojāta* in the composite form of the *purusha* portrayed on its front facets.

In Tamilnadu two rare *mukhaliṅgas* have come to light and both revealed the Vedic characteristics not the later *āgamic.* The first one of the early Pallava period (sixth

century A.D), is a *Chatur-mukhalinga* from Tiruvadigai,[7] part of Panruti town, in south-Arcot district. It was perhaps originally consecrated in a shrine but now kept in the western corridor of the *prākāra.* The archaic *Vesarapīṭha* with its bold *padmapāduka* realistically moulded is a unique example. From various literary accounts Tiruvadigai appears to be one among the Vīrattānams and of hoary antiquity[8] associated with the Sangam age Adigaiman Neduman Anji. It was here that Appar and Pallava Mahendra-I took to Śaivism, There are indications that the ruined brick temple now called "Gunadara-Viccuram" which is just two furlongs from Vīrattanēśvar itself, though of brick over a stone *adhisṭhāna* is robust like Rāja Rājēśvaram of Tanjore, the latter as observed by N.S. Ramaswamy has "something of the air of that majesty" of Tanjavur masterpiece. There is every likelihood that the Mukhalinga of Tiruvadigai may have been enshrined there. This does not rule out the possibility of the *sthāna* around the Vīrattānēśvara temple being its earliest habitat and there are strong indications that the very foundations of the edifice were of pre-Mahendra date. In any case the site deserves to be probed archaeologicall to stratify the temple.

Pañcha-mukha Linga from Virinchipuram (PL. 11A, 11B)

The only known example of a Five-faced *mukha-linga* was spotted by me at Virinchipuram, a village 11-km west of Vellore town, in district North-Arcot of Tamilnadu. In this example the top *Īśāna* which is according to Rūpa-maṇḍana, beyond the ken of *Yogis*, (*Yoginām apyagōcharam*) has a face looking to the sky. All the faces are shown only upto the neck and oriented to the cardinals. However the third eye is present except in the case of Vāmadeva in line with the *āgamic* prescription. This rarest *linga*, though a later Chola creation, (11th century A.D) retains the Vedic concepts. Surprisingly the temple goes by the name Mārgasahāyēśvara echoing the Vedic form of Rudra as *Padīnām pataye namaḥ*,[9] lord of all paths and guide to wanderers, the *Mārgabadhu*, that he was.

Early Traces of Lakuliśa Pāśupata cult in Lower Dravidadēśa

we have considered the early spread of *Vaīdika* Śaivism. The narrative would be incomplete without telling about yet another find, very rare indeed; from Mukhalingam, district Srikakulam (A.P).

Pāśupata-Liṅga From Mukhalingam: (PL.12)

Mukhalingam is virtually a city of temples, like Bhuvaneswar, and a prominent place right from early historic[10] period through the Eastern Ganga rule. A sand stone squattish four-faced pillar measuring 1.5 m. height and 50 cm. broad on each facet and rounded on top was found. On its each facet, human heads are carved, the frontal facet has, however, the full depiction of a two-armed seated crosslegged *Yogi*. The *paṭṭabandha* is fastened as in a *sopāśraya* type, the *lakuṭa* in the left hand held closer to the chest and a rosary in the right hand. It might be noted that Śrīkanṭha,[11] the founder of the pāśupata sect, was concieved as *Sadā-Śiva* with five faces. A temple for Śrīkanṭha *Pañchamukha* was known. The Mukhalingam example, without the third eye on any face, like Amaravati *ishṭalingā*, has the earliest depiction of *Lakutapāṇīśa* from South-India datable to third-fourth century A.D.

It is held by some scholars that Lakuīśa Pāśupatism[12] did not "exert any influence in Tamilnadu proper and such figures are absent." J.N. Banerjea[13] also held likewise some time ago. But recent evidences have clearly shown that the spread of Lakulīśa pāśupatism very much accelerated and moulded the growth of Śaivism into Tamilnadu and Karnataka through Āndhradeśa. A two-armed Lakulisa, cross-legged, ithyphallic and seated on *kuśa* grass, holding in the right hand a vessel or *mātulunga* fruit, in the left a Lakuṭa with short *daṇḍa* resting on the shoulder came from Perur, (PL. 18) district Periar. Almost coeval with this figure are the two examples[14] of two handed Lakulīśa figures from Arittapatti Cave (Madurai), Dharmarājaratha (Mahabalipuram) and Devarmalai (Pudukkoottai). Lakulīśa

Pāśupatism was undoubtedly receiving patronage of Renāḍu Choḷas[15] in seventh century A.D. At Bhairavakoda (Prakasam) Daṇḍapāṇi or Daṇḍśīvara appears in a full fledged form[16]

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11. *Epigraphia Indica*, I, p. 284.

12. R. Nagaswamy, "The origin and Development of Śaivism", in *Shankara and Shanmata*, Souvenir, (Madras, 1969).

13. J. N. Banerjea, *The Development of Hindu Iconography*, (Third Edition, New Delhi, 1974), p. 465.

14. K.V. Soundara Rajan, *Art of South India-Tamilnadu and Kerala*, (New Delhi, 1978), pp. 39, 160, fig. 37.

15. "*Om svasti śrīmat jayati dhṛit chandraṣēkharaṁ-vipulāmaia-tāraka śubhaṁ lokē gaganaṁ=iva suprasannam vapur-ā pratimaṁ Lakuṭa pāṇaṇ*", *Epigaphia Indica* XXVII, p. 274, ft. no. 6.

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CHAPTER V

OTHER BRAHMANICAL CULTS IN SOUTH INDIA DURING POST SATAVAHANA PERIOD

The later Sātavāhanas and the Ikshvāku rulers in Āndhradēśa have virtually brought a religious revolution, as it were, and revived the sanskrit language and Brāhamnical religion. The earliest sanskrit inscription in the south comes from Amaravati of the time of Gautamīputra' Yajña Śrī Sātakarṇi (A.D. 165-194). The Ikshvāku epigraphs unearthed from the city of Vijayapurī and issued by the ruling kings are in chaste sanskrit, employing even metrical compositions in respect of those relating to the Brāhmanical temples (Sarvadeva and Pushpabhadrasvāmi). The early brick temples (*devakūṭamis*) excavated at Virapuram (district Kurnool); Chejerla (district Guntur), Gudimallam Phase-2 (district Chittur) and the large number of temples at the Ikshvāku city of Vijayapurī clearly reveal that all the ritualistic modes like *abhisheka*, *archana*, *argha*, *prasāda* and *thīrtha* were systematised from occasional (*namittika*), to prepetual (*nitya*). Arrangements were institutionalised. Not only a variety of temples (apsidal, square, rectangular) but grand iconographic creations came to being, for the first time, in South India. Excavations at Vijayapurī fortunately took place on a greater scale during 1954-60 which led to the discovery of almost life size images of Mahāsena, Kārtikeya, (PL. 14-A,B) Devasena (PL. 13), Śaktī, Navagṛhās, etc. These were consecrated in temples. A lime stone Śivalinga, 1.20 metre with the *madhya* and *pārśva-sūtras* well marked over the *pūja* or *rudra-bhāgas*, was found

duely consecrated in the apsidal shrine of *Mahādeva Pushpabhadrasvāmi*. This unit has all the components like the *mukha-maṇḍapa*, with a centrally raised platform, rather a *maṇḍapikā* for *abhisheka* and *utsavas*, a *mahāmaṇḍapa* in front, *dhvajastambha* on an elaborate platform all set within a *prākāra* with low *gōpura-dvāras* marked at the eastern and western main gateways. Sanskrit grew along with Śaivism under the royal care and patronage of the Ikshvākus who brought with them the Ayodhya-Kosala parentage. If the Imperial Guptas were responsible for laying firm foundations for the growth of Historic-Hinduism and iconography, the later Sātavāhana-Ikshvāku rulers, almost a couple of centuries earlier went on a big way and accomplished this task and verily switched on to a golden age spheres of Brāhmanical Art and Architecture in Andhra-Karnataka.

In north-Karnataka, at Vasana, district Dharwad, an inscription[2] of the time of Vāsishṭhiputra Siri Puḷumāvi (88-116 A.D), refers to the installation of the God Mahādeva Chaṇḍa Śiva in a temple (*āyatana*). The Banavasi record[3] of Vāsisṭhīputra Śiva, Śrī Puḷumāvi (145-152 A.D) in front of Madhukēśvara Temple confirms the existence of an apsidal temple, with a Śiva *liṅga* inside, in the mound called Donigudda, along with the Rouletted Ware, Russet-coated ware and coins of Yajña Śrī Sātakarṇi. At Aihole and Pattadakal excavations, S.R. Rao brought to light brick temples,[4] along with the Sātavāhana coins. At Vadegaon-Madhavapur,[5] district Belguam, a sequence from Mauryan to third century A.D. was found. A Brahmī record of first century B.C. refers to a *brāhmin* of *Kāśyapasagotra* performing a Vājapeya sacrifice.[6] Following the Sātavāhanas, the Cuṭus of Banavasi were patrons of Brāhmancial temples. Next in point of time is the Talagunda inscription of Kadamba Kākusthavarmā which states that God Bhava-Śiva at Sthānakuṇḍīśvara[7] was worshipped by Sātakarṇis. Śiva here was the presiding deity of the place as well as of the family. He was worshipped as *Bhava-Śraj*, the creator of the world. In another

Kādamba record of the time of Śāntivarmā, we learn, that Satakarṇi and other rulers worshipped God Praṇaveśvara. This would clearly demonstrate that Āndhradēśa and Karṇataka revived Brāhmancial Art and Architecture[8] on a large scale during the early centuries of the christian era But these are confined to the northern and western parts of Karnātaka and of course the entire Āndhradēśa. How about then the lower *Draviḍadēśa*, that is Tamilnadu and Kerala? The evidences are deplorably lacking. More emphasis was laid till recently on pre and proto-Historic studies, as well as Megalithic excavations. *It is impossible to think of Tamilnadu, particularly with its rich and vast early Śaiva literature*, without the vestiges of the period. I feel that this paucity is basically due to lack of planned research studies followed by careful excavations in these areas.

Worship of Trimūrtis in Early Andhra and Tamilnadu:

During the post Ikshvāku period in Andhra with the rise of the Vishṇukuṇḍins, we notice a total shift in favour of brāhmanical cults. The worship of deities like Brahma-Īśvara-Vishṇu or in place of Brahmā, the Śaktī or Śrī comes to stay. We have a few significant examples to illustrate the pre-Pallava trends in brāhmanical Art and Religion in South. T.V.G. Sastry[9] published a lime stone plaque measuring 26.7 × 19cm which showed in relief the three brāhmanical deities in an orderly way. At the extreme right *Trimukha*-Brahmā firmly seated on a calyx of a lilly in *vyākhyānamudra*; Śiva-*Liṅga* with Nandī below inset in a square base; *Śaktī* seated close by the left side in *pralaṁbapāda*, her head part is symbolized by a large lotus, the pericap more prominently, hence *devyāśchamastake-padmaṁ*. She is *Śrī* as well as *Śaktī* here. A *guhya* is below her feet as caryatid as in the Bharhut rail or Mathura *Yakshiṇis*. He has broad shoulders but shrunken and grim. Next to this is a standing young and slim male figure with a spear (*Śaktidhara*). A seated Narasimha at the end of the plaque possessed as usual animal head and human

body. The prowess of the main Gods, Śiva and *Śaktī* is specially highlighted by their *Vāhanas* the bull in the case of Śiva, symbolised here as *Linga-pīṭha* and a crouching *Nara-Vāhana* in the case of theriomorphic *Śaktī*. Another soap-stone plaque (9 cm. square) associated with the Vishṇukuṇḍin brick temples[10] from Keesarigutta (PL. 15) excavations, 40 km from Hyderabad, is a pointer to the development of the above cult worship. It has centrally a boldly drawn female figure the head part a fully blown lotus, the lower pericarp prominently indicated above the *Kanṭhikas* in the neck. She is seated on hips and legs outstretched as in the nude Nagarjunakonda mother-goddess figure, but here possessing a *kaupīna*. The hands are uprised and rest on the knees. The right one holds up a conical *Linga* on *pīṭha*, while the left carries a head part of a Lion with erect ears and a mane. Correspondingly at the lower part of the plaque below the *linga* is a conchant Bull and at the *Simha* head, a *Nara* in adoration. Almost of the same period in coastal Andhra-Telengana regions, we get a few cult objects of this class. The Kondamotu limestone panel published by Abdul Waheed Khan is an important one depicting the *Pañchavīras* (*Vṛishṇivīras*), Samkarshaṇa Vāsudeva, Pradyumna, Sāṁba, Aniruddha as well as the *Vibhava* aspect through a central robust figure shown seated-at-ease in Man-Lion form. The two human hands emerging from the shoulder of this Lion-headed God carry Sword and *prayōga chakra* respectively the *lañchanas* of Vishṇu, like the *Śrīvatsa* mark on the chest. The erect phalus emphasizes yet another aspect of yoga-Narasimha. Again from Yelleswarām excavations an image of limestone,[11] only a torso, most probably Vāsudeva, with Śankha held in left hand at *Kaṭi*: while the right carries the *daṇḍa*. From the excavations at Chejerla (district Guntur), we have recovered not only brick temples but many brāhmaṇcial icons. They are of limestone and demonstrate the continuance of the art impulses of the Ikshvāku period.[12] The image of Sūrya, Kārtikeya (PL. 16 cover page), Ganēśa (PL. 17), undoubtedly reflect Ikshvāku style but these are

post Ikshvāku in date duly consecrated within the precints of the Kapotēśvarasvāmi temple complex within brick shrines. There is no trace of Buddhism or Vaishṇava cult at this place. At Nagarjunakonda, as also in other later Sātavāhana sites, like Ter, Kondapur, etc. within the excavated levels cult deities (*laukika-devatas*) such as miniature Gaṇēśa, Kārtikeya, nude Godess (*utere* emphasized), made of clay or stucco were found in large numbers. Similar cult objects, though stray, were encountered in Karnataka sites too percolating from Andhra or perhaps from Aparāṇta, too.

The Guntur-Nellore Pallavas and Vishṇukuṇḍins on one hand and Cuṭus-Kadambas of Banavasi on the other, played effective role in disseminating the Brāhmanical cults to Toṇḍaimaṇḍalam and still southwards. In recent times A. Sundara[18] has brought to light some early icons such as *dvibhuja-Vishṇu* from Kontapla (Uttara Kannada) *Chaturbhuja* Vishṇu from Sandur; *Dvibhuja* Narasimha from Halashi (Belguam), Kargal (Uttara Kannada), Kupputuru (Shimoga) as well as Harihara from Harihara and Gokarṇa which display clear Gupta-Vākāṭaka characteristics as seen at Ramtek (Vidarbha) and like sites. The impact is best seen in early Vishṅukuṇḍin times and the Kunidene and Kondamotu specimens also reveal this. The reasons are not for to seek. The areas are well knit geographical units with the ruling families like Cuṭus-Ikshvākus, Gupta-Vākāṭaka-Vishṇukuṇḍins, Early Pallavas-Kadamba-Gangas being inter-related and culturally together in effectively reviving the Vedic rituals and Brāhmanical cults.

We have described the earliest 'Somaskanda' plaque from Kunidene above, which has, in addition, the forms of *tri*-mukha Brahma and Narasimha Vishṇu at both the extremes. The *Uma* here is both *Śri* and mother (*mastake padmaṁ: and Mā devatā*). In the north-west*bhadra-koshṭha* of the Kāmakshiamman temple at Kāñchīpuram, the ancient *Śaktī-pīṭha*, an exactly similar lotus-headed but nude female Goddess seated with the utere emphasized,

exists under a thick coat of vermillion and *haldi* and mistaken as the image of Jyēshṭha. This is the earliest stone icon in the whole of Kāñchī and perhaps originally consecrated at this "*Kāma-Koṭṭam*" a *Śaktī sthāna*[14] in open, apart from the *Pañchabhūta liṅga*, of Ekāmbarēśvara standing for *Prithivī*. This sacred *sthāna* has subsequently several structural embellishments and undergone alterations. The worship of *Ādya-Śaktī*, or the *prakṛti* was in vogue much earlier even in the Harappan sites and later on too.[15] Example of nude stucco figures emphasizing the utere in the later Sātavāhana and Ikshvāku period were well known. Periplus refers[16] to the *Kanyā-Kumārī* worship (60 A.D).

We have stated in the beginning about the Somaskanda images in relief at Yazilikaya grottoes. The very first cave temple, Mandagapattu in Tamilnadu, of the Early Pallavas was described as '*Brahmīśvara-Vishṇu - Lakshitāyatana.*' The order of Gods mentioned here exactly tallies with the Kunidine plaque. Such plaques of limestone are reported from many sites in Andhra, from Samalkot-Bhimavaram (East Godavari) to Peddamudiyam (Cuddapah) and distinctly mark the prevalence of the cult of *Tridevas* along with *Śaktī* which were symbolically or therio-anthropo-morphically depicted.

The Birur grant of the Kadamba king Vishṇuvarman-I (490 A.D) begins with the invocation[17] "*Hara-Nārāyaṇa-Brahma tritayaya namaṅ sadā; śūla-chakrāksha sūtrodgha-bhāva-bhāsita-pāṇine*".

The *Traīpurusha* or *Trideva* cult seem to be prolific in this formative period as can also be seen from the Cave-III of the time of Chālukya Maṅgalēśa (578 A.D), where graceful reliefs of Brahma-Vishṇu-Umāmahēśvara are represented. Slightly later, King Vijayāditya (699 A.D) consecrated a *traipurushadēvālaya* at *Vātāpyadhisṭhāna*, with the standing images of Brahmā, Vishṇu, and Mahēśvra over an elongated *Pīṭha* within the *Garbha*.[18] So even the

Brahmīśvara-Vishṇu cult is also a legacy from Krishna-Guntur-Nellore post-Sātavāhana phase to both Karṇāṭaka and Toṇḍaimaṇḍalam. *Even here, may it be noted, Śiva remained supreme.* K.V. Soundera Rajan has made an important observation after an analytical study of the cult in early Pallava temples of Toṇḍaimaṇḍalam.[19] He says that the *Liṅga-Pīṭhas* and *Vārimārgas* for carrrying *abhisheka* water were "*Post-facto* utilitarian improvisations or insertions" in the temples of Tripurāntakēśvara, Irāvatanēśvara at Kāñchī, shore Temple and Mukundanayanar at Mahabalipuram. There is no *Liṅga* or *Pīṭha* in the caves of the Mahendra and Māmalla period but only a *vyaktarūpa* (Somaskanda), carved in relief or painted figures on the back wall of the shrine chamber.

Inspite of the panoply of Gods, evolution of the cult and enormous growth of *āgama*, the worship of Vedic deities, the rituals and practices continued as obligatory accompaniments in daily life. This is more purely and emphatically preservedin the lower *Draviḍadēśa* than any where else.

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2. K.V. Ramesh, in Noboru Koroshima, *Op. cit.*, (1985), p. 6. This king is regarded as the last ruler by K.V. Ramesh and dated to 217-224 A.D. The temple is taken as sepulchral (Paḷḷ-paḍai) type named after the deceased king Chaṇḍaśrī. This is not valid. There is no trace of the Imperial rule after Yajña Śrī Sātakarṇi and Vijaya in the outlying provinces of the empire like Southern Coastal Andhra and Karnataka. The successors like Ikshvākus and Chuṭus came to power. *Coinage of the Sātavāhana Empire*, (New Delhi, 1980), pp. 7-8, 25-26. We have followed the chronology adopted in this work. Even the Myakadoni (Bellari) inscription should be regarded as that of the Vaśisṭhīputra

Puḷumāvi (II), not the last king (IV)., although the date portion is corrected recently as year-6 by M.J. Sharma see S.P. Tiwari, "On the Numerals of Brāhmī Records", Paper read at the *South Asian Workshop on Epigraphy*, (Mysore, March 25-31, 1985). The imperial Sātavāhana power extended to Karnataka from the times of Gautamīputra Sātakarṇi (54-88 A.D), after the conquest as narratted in the Nasik record and his sons consolidated these Karnataka territories.

3. *Journal of the Epigraphical Society of India*, I (Mysore, 1974), pp. 34-35.

4. *Lalit Kala*, no. 15 (1965), pp. 9-18 and *Śrīkanṭhika* (Mysore, 1973), p. 27.

5. A. Sundara, in *Madhu, M.N. Deshpande Festschrift*, (New Delhi, 1981), pp. 88-90.

6. R.S. Panchamukhi, *Archaeology of Karnataka*, (Dharwad, 1953), p. 60.

7. *Epigraphia Indica*, IV, *Intro*. p. 188 and P.B. Desai, ed. *A Histroy of Karnataka*, (Dharwad, 1970) pp. 53-55.

8. H. Raghunatha Bhatt, "Art and Architecture of the Sātavāhana and Kadamba Period", in A.V. Narasimha Murthy, ed. *Archaeology of Karnataka*, (Mysore, 1978), pp. 211, 217, 233.

9. *Journal of the Indian Society of Oriential Art*, II (New Series, Baroda), pp. 16-21; See also I.K. Sarma, "*Early Historical Vestiges at Vijayawada Ithihas*, Vol. VII, no. 2 (Hyderabad, 1979), pp. 23-31.

10. I.K. Sarma, "Brāhmanical Temples and Cult Objects from Keesaragutta", *Kusumāñjali, New Interpretation of Indian Art and Culture, C. Sivarama Mūrti Commemoration Volume*, pp. 233-239.

11. M.L. Nigam, "Early Iconography of Vishṇu in Andhra" in *Śrinīdhi* (Madras, 1983), pp. 127-130. There is a tendency to regard the inscriptional reference to Ashṭabhujasvāmī as an eight-handed Vishṇu-Nārāyaṇa image of wood consecrated during the Ikshvāku period at Nagarjunakonda. We have, on variuus occasions, proved that this record refers to the *pratishṭhā of Ashṭa-bhuja-Aghōramūrtī Śiva* after a victorious military campaign by Ehuvala Chamtamula (II). The temple complex at site no. 29 has beyond doubt yielded a *Liṅga-Pīṭha* set up with several *Bāṇa-*

lingas and the said inscription onthe *Pitha* slab with the central slot for fixing the deity belongs to an *angālāya* where this eight-handed from of Aghora-Śiva was installed. See my paper, "Epigraphical and Icono-plastic Delineations of Ashṭabhuja Aghoramūrti Śiva". *Vidarbha Samshodhann Maṇdal Vārshik*, (Nagpur, 1970), pp. 192-203: Also "Ābhira Vasushena Inscription at Nagarjunakonda", *Indica*, Vol. 7 (Bombay, 1970). pp. 1-13; More recently again in I.K. Sarma, *Op. cit.*, (New Delhi, 1982), pp. 110, 126-130, Fig. 8. PL. 62. The difficulty with certain writers is to repeat the older views expressed by an eminent epigraphist in *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XXXIV, p. 200), who had no time nor inclination to examine the archaeological context of the excavated objects bearing the inscription, their placement and associated structural entities. I may firmly assert once again that there is not even a scrap of evidence of any image or even a minor cell meant for any *Vaishṇavītic* God and Site-29 is entirely a complex for a Śaivitic establishment. There is no trace of Vaishṇavism in this period in South India. Yelleswaram evidence cited above is undoubtedly of Post-Ikshvāku date and even this is a loose fragmentary image whose locus and status in the temple complex, if any, is beyond any body's guess. It is strange that some scholars are still inclined to regard an invocatory reference to Nārāyana at the verse of the record to refer to the main God consecrated, which is not appropriate in this case. H. Sarkar, "The Nagarjunakonda Phase of the Lower Krishna Valley Art", in Fredrick Asher and G.S. Gai, (ed.). *Op. cit.*, (1985), pp. 31-32. Again K.R. Srinivasan *Temples of South India*, (New Delhi, 1979), p.24.

12. I.K. Sarma, *Op. cit.*, (1982), pp. 137-145.

13. *Presidential Address, Indian History Congress*, 45th *Session*, (Annamalai, 27th Dec. '84), pp. 18-19.

14. K.R. Venkataraman "Devī Kāmakshī in Kāñchī", (Tirunelveli, 1973). K.R. Srinivasan, "Tiru Kāmakoṭṭam" *Proceedings of the All India Oriental Conference*, 13th Session, 1946 (Nagpur, 1951), III, pp. 50-56. Sattamangalam inscription dated to 16th year of Nandivarman Pallavamalla refers to *Kāma-Koṭṭam* in its imprecatory portion. The placement at the North-West *Koshṭha*, which is originally meant for Durgā or Vaishṇavī is also significant but the present stone temple as well as the image of Kāmākshi inside is of later Chōḷa period.

15. Sudhakar Chattopadhyaya, *Tbe Evolution of Theistic Sects in Ancient India upto the times of Śankarāchārya*, (Calcutta, 1962), pp. 53-58.

16. Wilfred H. Schoffs, *The Periplus of the Erythrean Sea*, (New Delhi, 1974), pp. 46, 52.

17. *Epigraphia Carnatica*, VI, (Old Series), p. 91. Kadur-162.

18. Fredrick Asher and G.S. Gai *Op. cit.*, (1985), pp. 205-207.

19. K.V. Soundera Rajan "Cult in Pallava Temples", *Transactions of Archaeological Society of South India*, 1962-65 (Madras, 1969), pp. 143-162; Also K.R. Srinivasan, *Op. cit.*, (1979), pp. 42, 56 and 66.

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PL. 14 (B) : Nagarjunakonda: Kārtikeya (Rear view).

PL. 15 : Keesarigutta, Dist. Hyderabad (A.P): Śaktī carrying *Liṅga* and Narasimha in the hands. c. 5th century A.D.

PL. 16 : Chejerla, Dist. Guntur (A.P): Kārtikeya, Circa, 4th century A.D. (cover page).

PL. 17 : Chejerla: Gaṇēśa, circa. 4th century A.D.

PL. 18 : Perur, Dist. Periyar (T.N): *Lakuliśa*, circa 7th century A.D.

Fig. 1 : Gudimallam: Paraśurāmēśvara Temple, Section and plan of the Excavated *Garbhagṛha*.

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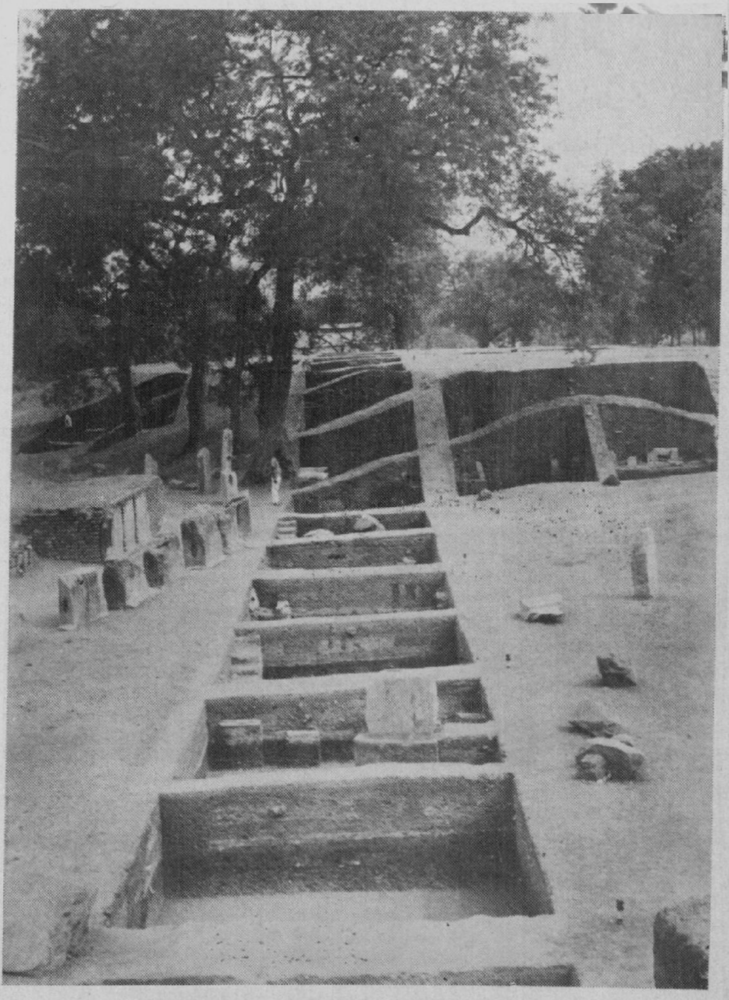


PL. 1 : Amaravati Dist. Guntur, Mahachaitya site

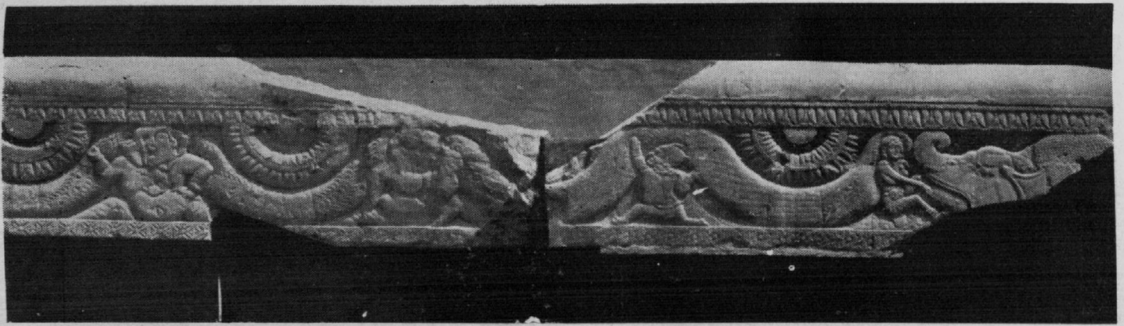
PL. 2 : Gudimallam, District Chittur, (A.P): Paraśurāmeśvara temple, Excavation within *garabhagṛha*, Foundational details of the *Piṭhas*, *Vedikā*, etc.

PL. 3 : Gudimallam: *Rudra-Yajamāna* on the *Linga*, Circa. 3rd century B.C.

PL. 4(a) : Gudimallam: *Guhya*, Frontal view.

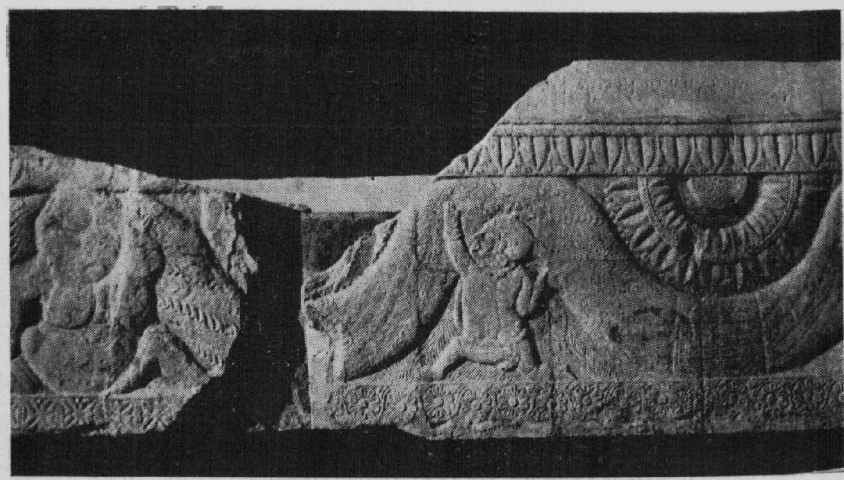
PL. 4(B) : Gudimallam : *Guhya*, Right side view.

PL. 4(C) : Gudimallam : *Guhya*, Left side view.

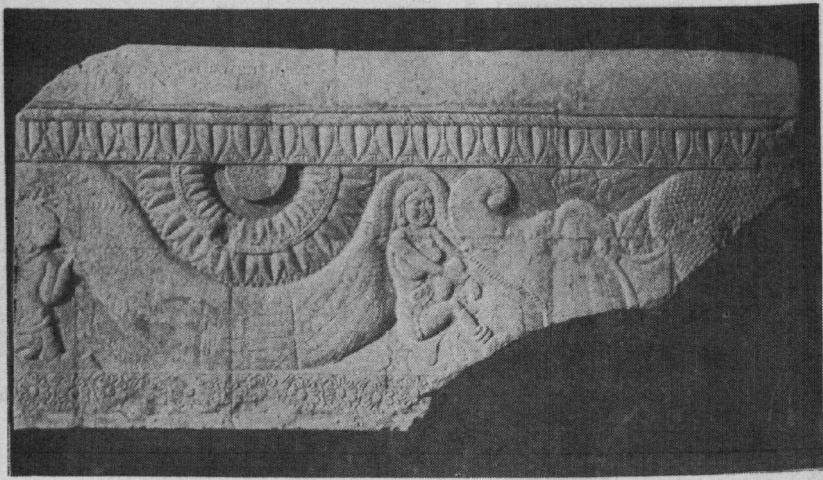


PL. 5(A): Amaravati: Limestone coping frieze depicting *mālā-vāhakas*, Circa 1st-2nd century B.C.

PL. 5(B): Amaravati: Coping, Gaṇēśa and Gaṇeśāṇi as *Mālāvāhakas*.



PL. 5(C) : Amaravati : Coping, Kubera as a *mālāvāhaka*.



PL. 5(D) : Amaravati : Coping, Lakshmī and *makara*, lotus Ryhzome.

PL. 6(A) : Datong, China, Cave No. 8 Śiva on Bull. (465-494 A. D.)

PL. 6(B) : Datong, China, Cave No. 8: Kumāra on Peacock (465-494 A. D).

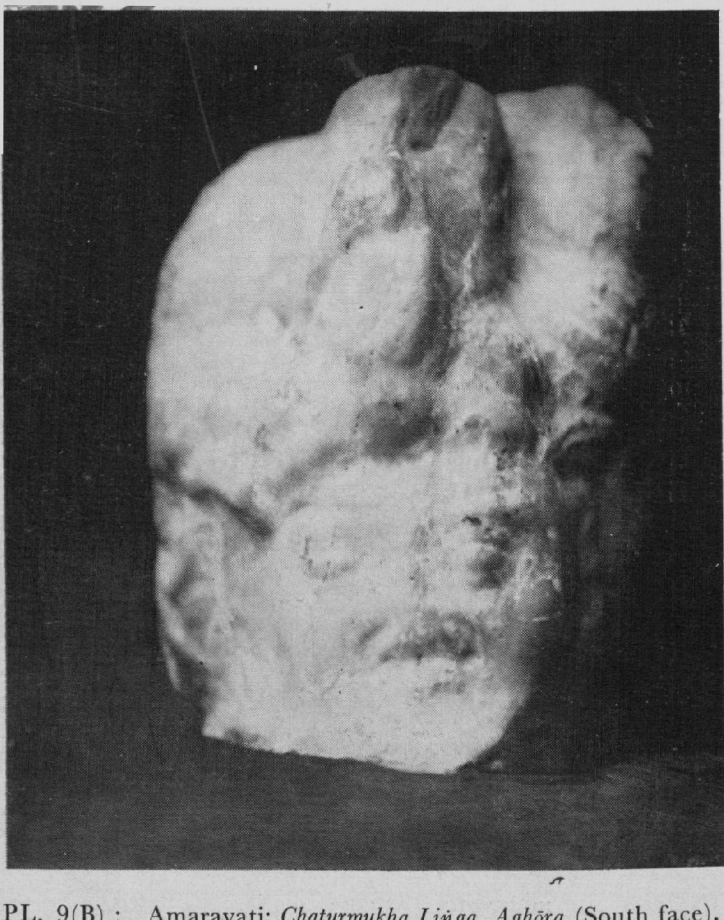
PL. 7(A) : Bharhut : Kupira Yaksha on rail upright
Circa. 3rd Century B.C.

PL. 7(B) : Bharhut Rail: Close view of the *Gaṇa* under the feet of Kupira Yaksha.

PL. 8(A) : Bharhut Rail : Close view of a *Guhya* in a medallion of the vertical.

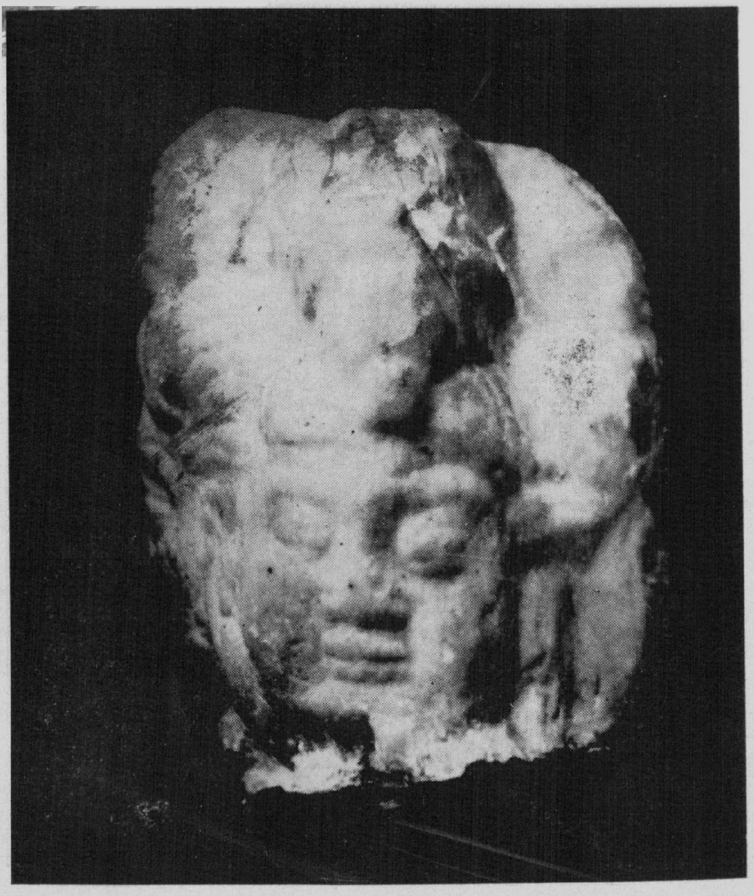
PL. 8(B) : Dhulikatta, District Karimnagar (A.P.): Caryatid, Circa 2nd century B.C.

PL. 9(A) : Amaravati: *Chaturmukha Liṅga* of limestone, Satavāhana, 1st century A.D. *Tatpurusha* (East face).

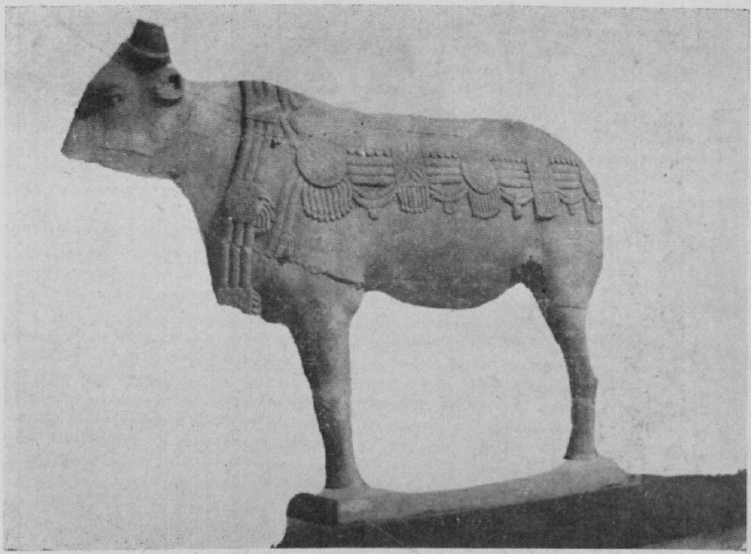


PL. 9(B) : Amaravati: *Chaturmukha Liṅga*, *Aghōra* (South face).

PL. 9(C) : Amaravati : *Chaturmukha Linga*, *Vāmadeva* (West face).



PL. 9(D) : Amaravati: *Chaturmukha Liṅga, Sadyojāta* (North Face).

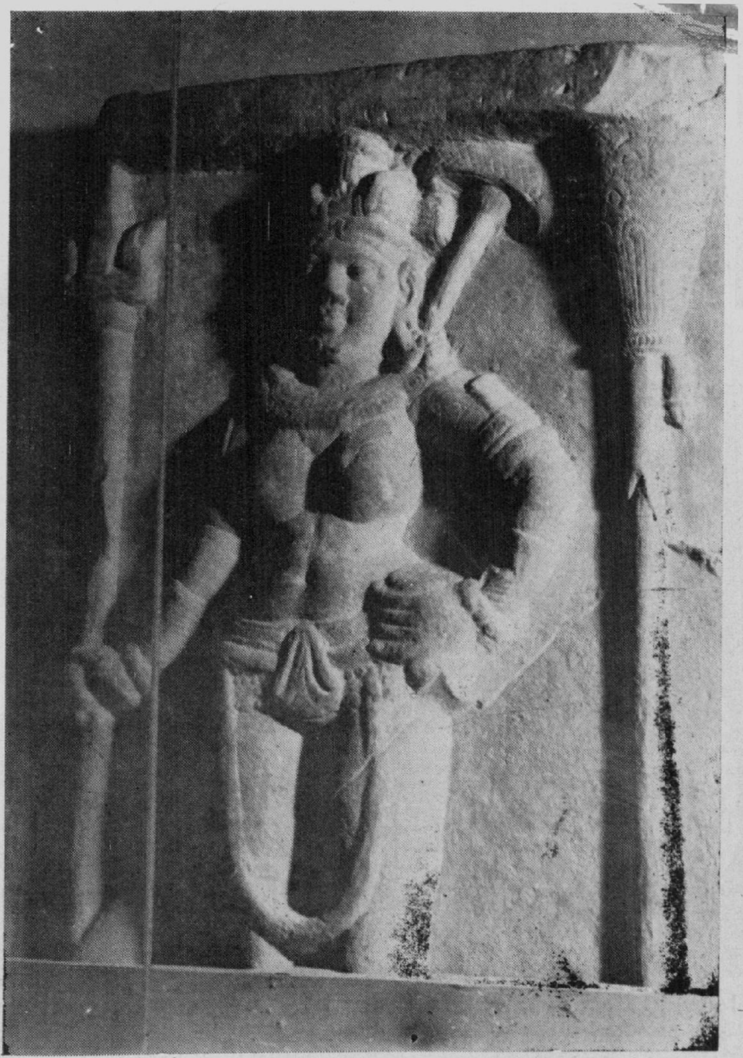


PL. 10 Amaravati standing *Nandi*: Sātavāhana. 1st century A. D.

PL. 11(A) : Virinchipuram, Dist. North Arcot (T.N): *Pañca-mukha Liṅga*, *Tatpurusha* (East) and *Īśāna* (Top face) c. 11th century A.D.

PL. 11(B) : Virinchipuram : *Pañcamukha Liṅga*, *Aghora* (South face).

PL. 12 : Mukhalingam, Dist. Srikakulam, (A.P), *Lakuṭa-pāṇiśa* on a *Pāsupata Liṅga*.



PL. 13 : Nagarjunakonda, District Guntur (A.P): Site-39, Devasena.

PL. 14(A) : Nagarjunakonda: Kārtikeya (Frontal view).

PL. 14(B) : Nagarjunakonda: Kārtikeya (Rear view).

PL. 15 : Keesaragutta, Dist. Hyderabad (A.P), *Śakti* carrying a *Liṅga* and Narasimha head, Circa. 5th Century A.D.

PL. 16 : Chejerla, Dist. Guntur (A.P): Kārtikeya, Circa, 4th century A. D. (cover page).

PL. 17 : Chejerla: Gaṇēśa, circa. 4th century A. D.

PL. 18 : Perur, Dist. Periyar (T. N): *Lakuliśa*, circa. 7th century A.D.

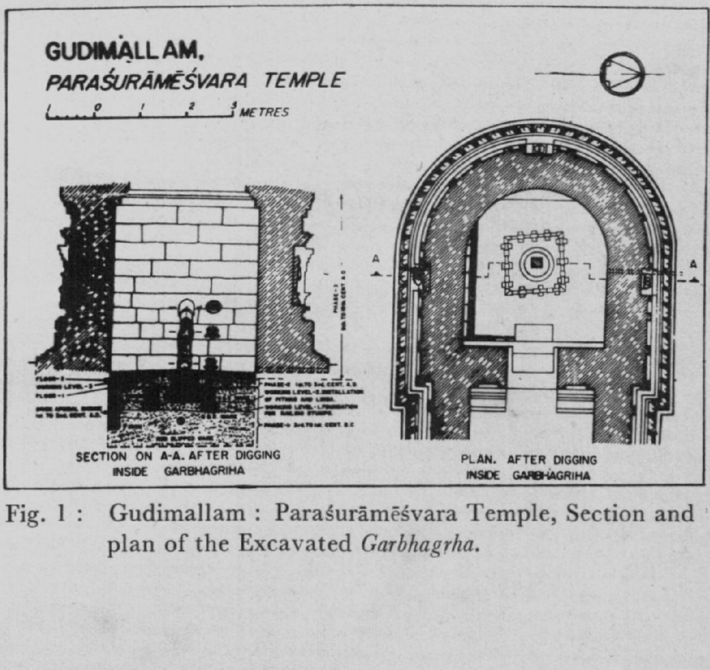


Fig. 1 : Gudimallam : Paraśurāmēśvara Temple, Section and plan of the Excavated *Garbhagṛha*.